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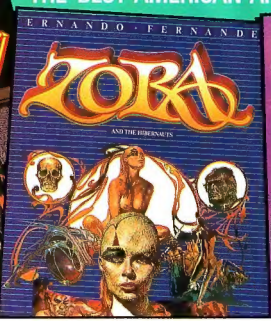

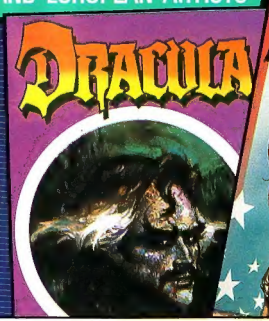

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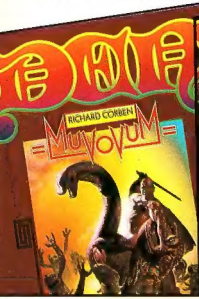

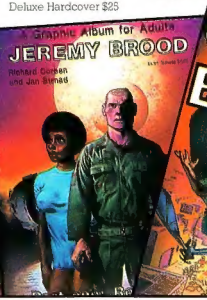

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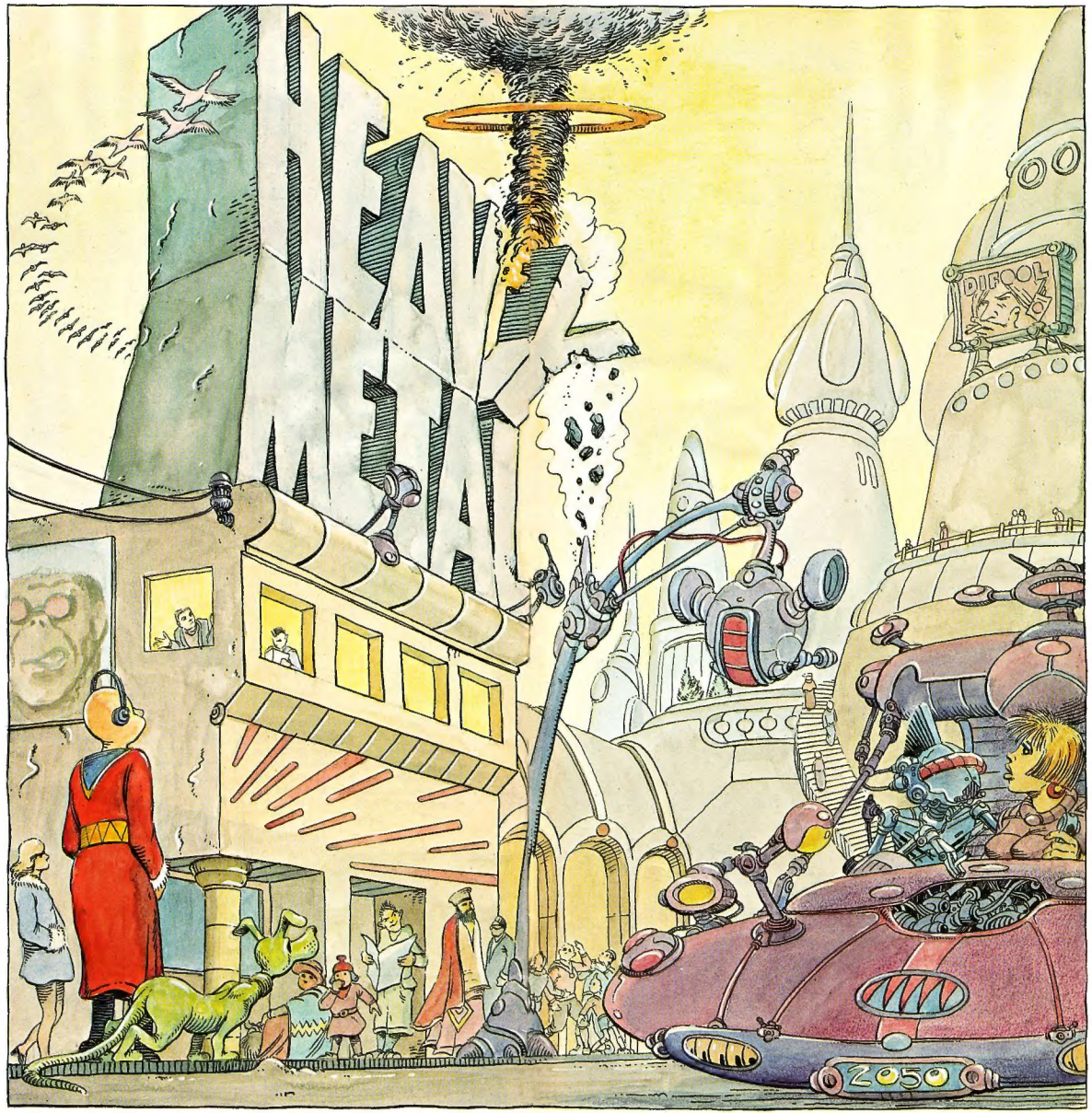

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THE CHAOS BEGINS JUNE 8

DOSSIER

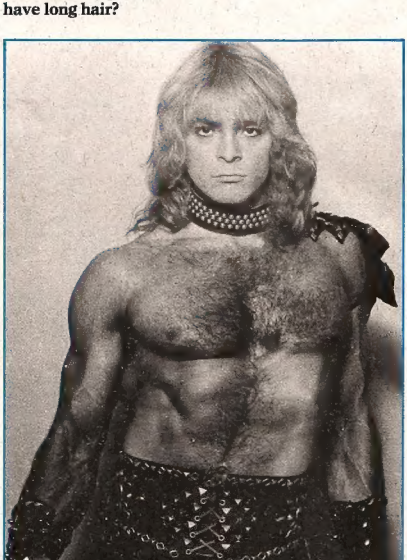
Thor: "I really loved Popeye and Superman when I was a kid. So much so that I used to wear the costumes under my clothes when I went to school."

THOR THROAT

If we accept the notion that heavy metal is the musical equivalent of the superhero comic, an inevitable question word-balloons overhead: where are the heroes? Villains we got plenty of: Ozzie's Joker, Ronnie Dio's Dormammu, Blue Oyster Cult's Ghostriders, and Rob Halford of Judas Priest's Child Molester (just made that one up—but can you think of a better comic-book villain for the eighties?). Enough bad guys to make the Forbidden Zone look like Times Square on New Year's Eve. But what about the good guys?

Introducing **Thor**. He's a dude with deltoids to match his decibels, a man with more muscle than a mountain of Marshall amps, and in his iron grip a hand-chiseled mandate from old man Odin to put our Earthly house in order. Walking into a room he occupies is a distinctly humbling experience, and his fearsome demeanor suggests to the wimp interviewer that a wrong word might get your face bitten off and fed raw to his consort, the luscious Pantera.

But of course, this comic-book-character-come-to-life act is just that—an act. (Whew!) Thor—Jon Mikl to his mom—is a pussycat of a guy, an ex-title-holding bodybuilder hailing originally from Vancouver, British Columbia. He's big, but sweet and totally unassuming. (And I'm not just saying that because he knows where I live . . . this is serious cover-blowing here.) Girlfriend, creative/business partner, and stage-show co-star Pantera—civilian handle Rusty Hamilton—while not as big (ahem) is just as sweet and unassuming, and speaks with a softly beguiling, southern drawl. Basically though, Thor's just a healthy boy with an unhealthy trilateral obsession: bodybuilding, heavy metal music, and the imagery of heroic fantasy. A natural combination, right? How come no one's done it before? Listen . . . .



Thor in a jovial mood. Who sez only pansies have long hair?

"I started bodybuilding when I was seven," Thor sez nonthunderously. "I won the Mr. Canada title when I was nineteen, competing against guys who were a lot older than me." Shortly thereafter, he encountered another comic-book character come to life, well before the poor guy's skin turned green. "I was runner-up to Lou Ferrigno in the Mr. Teenage America contest. Even then he was incredible. By the time we got to Mr. Universe, I couldn't come *near* him—he was a *monster*." He laughs. I laugh with him. I ain't dumb.

Besides pumping iron, young Jon also busied himself devouring comics and trashy science-fiction movies. He fancied himself a hero quite early. "I really loved Popeye and Superman when I was a kid. So much so that I used to wear the costumes under my clothes when I went to school. They thought I was pretty strange." Massive doses of Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin soon sealed Boy Thor's fate. "When I was training, in my basement or in the gym, I used to put on the headphones and listen to Black Sabbath *real loud* as I worked out. It would drive me crazy." (That'll do it to *anyone*.) The point of no return had been reached for young Jon. He was forever lost to civilized life.

The stage beckoned. He herded together his band and a squad of musclemen, and played everywhere from lumberjack camps in Alaska to NYC's own new-wave den of iniquity, the Mudd Club. An album, **Keep the Dogs Away** (MCA) came out in 1978, but Thor is quick to dismiss it. "Too power-pop," he says disapprovingly. "Somebody was telling me what to do then. But that's all over. *Nobody* tells me what to do now." You bet.

Lawsuits followed, as Jon tried to extricate himself from his manager. As the lawyer is mightier than the sword, it was five years before he was able to release another record—this past fall's **Unchained** (Mongol Horde). For Viking funeral music, it ain't bad (all that stuff sounds the same to me). He's also the star of his own superhero comic book, **Rock Warrior**, which is a hoot, despite the amateurish Marvelisms of artist Ken Landgraf (all that stuff looks the same to me).

The show's the thing, though, and Thor live is a spectacle of epic proportions. A twelve-foot-tall, metal robot menaces our hero. Iron bars are bent into pretzels. A mystic hammer is swung. Flashpots explode. Lives are endangered. "I used to do a routine in my show where I would pile bricks on my chest, and a guy would come out and take off the top layer with a pneumatic drill. Then he'd finish

"British metal audiences favor amphetamines and glue."

Hot lunch with Slayer.

the job with a sledgehammer. But one night about a year ago, the guy doing it got a little carried away with the sledgehammer. He kept smashing at the last layer of bricks, and got the left side of my ribcage along with it. I don't do that one anymore."

Rusty adds, "People think that all these things Thor does are just *stunts*. But they're all *real*, and a lot more dangerous than people imagine. Thor's like the Evel Kneivel of rock'n' roll."

Thor nods vigorously. "I just go crazy when I'm up there. I *am* playing a character on stage, but I suppose it is a reflection of some of my own personality. I do have a lot of anger in me, and this is my way of getting it out. I can be an absolute *maniac* on stage—and then get paid for it. It's great. That's the beauty of fantasy—it's entertainment, and it's therapeutic!"

Seems to me, Thor is a victim of his times. He's a junk-culture junkie who, like many of us, saw one monster movie too many, and his brain hasn't been the same since. It's just as our parents warned. But now the tables have been turned. The fantasy persona Thor's imagined for himself—a mixture of Dirty Harry and Conan, he says —has been brought to life in the dramatic arena, where his adventures and tests of strength are enacted against a majestically booming, banshee-guitar soundtrack. It's a heavy metal Wagnerian opera of post-holocaust gladiatorial combat. It sure beats hell out of working for a living.

—Lou Stathis

(Mongol Horde: Box J, Island Park, NY 11558; Thunder Productions, 25 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.)

TESTING METTLE

American heavy metal culture is based on downs and alcohol—and for the most part, the music reflects it, catering to slow wits and decade-old sounds and style. But British metal audiences favor amphetamines and glue; they go to their shows dazed and wired. And though a lot of Brit metal is as crappy as the stateside stuff, some of it is energetic enough to match the audience's hyped-up nerves.

Motorhead are the undisputed kings of British Amphetamine Metal (BAM—I just made that up). For seven years these unglamorous greasers have played consistently crazed, bass-heavy, rattling rock'n'roll. Created and led by bassist/vocalist Lemmy Kilmister (ex of hippie cultists Hawkwind), Motorhead have made their mark by treading the fine line between BAM and grungily metalesque punk/hardcore. Their latest LP, ***Another Perfect Day*** (Mercury), debuts guitar hero Brian Robertson (replacing Eddie Clarke), who's removed some of the punk edge and added a vocabulary of familiar hm licks—without disturbing the band's trademarked speed, aural violence, and booming cacophony. This one may be Motorhead's best LP; though it lacks a Classic Song, it's far more consistent and varied than their previous offerings.

Runners-up in the BAM sweepstakes would seem to be **Tank**, though their early promise may go unrealized. Bassist Algy Ward formed this Motorheadesque power trio with brothers Mark and Peter Brabbs (drums and guitar) after leaving the Damned in 1980 (his vomitous, jarring intro to the Damned's 1979 comeback hit, "Love Song," may be the greatest fifteen seconds in rock'n'roll). On their Eddie Clarke-produced 1981 debut, ***Filth Hounds of Hades*** (U.K. Kamaflage), the chummy barroom hm-punk threesome played like they were fighting each other with pool cues; big choruses, big rhythm, lots of attack. But after that hot entrance, Tank failed to take off—two subsequent LPs have been dull and songless, though the most recent, ***This Means War*** (U.K. Music for Nations), finds them—now a four-piece—a bit more on the track.

Ignore it. Ignited by bassist Joey DeMaio and guitarist Ross the Boss (remember the Dictators?), Manowar burns, playing massively raspy blasts of shrieking speed and wrenchingly dense, slow skanks. Their metal and volume plunder may be some of the purest razor-edged steel-sounding music ever recorded, bringing to mind the metal-for-metal's-sake structuralism of Glenn Branca or Swans. Manowar aren't the best songwriters, but their unbelievable sound—half grandiose pomp, half train wreck—more than makes up for it. Both their LPs, ***Battle Hymns*** (EMI) and ***Into Glory Ride*** (Megaforce), are well worth a listen.

For four albums (spanning 1979-81) the **Cockney Rejects**, from the slums of London's East End, were the recognized champions of broad, anthemic Oi music (a working class simplification of punk, combining simple, loud playing with football-cheer chants and drunken, often patriotic, pub ideology). For their fifth album, 1982's ***The Wild Ones*** (U.K. AKA), the Rejects completely changed direction, avidly becoming a ripping, hard rock band of the UFO/Aerosmith/Judas Priest variety (in fact, the album is produced by ex-UFO bassist Pete Way). Taking on standard stadium rock with the obnoxious spirit of arrogant novices, they infuse the hollering riff'n'roll with an earthy, punk spirit. It's loud, heavy, snarling stuff—I like it, though the Rejects' change of life was greeted with derision by their former supporters.

Those are four of your more interesting modern metallurgists. You might also check out ***Girlschool***; four tough-looking women who play quasi-standard 1970s-based

Manowar operate a lucrative small animal disposal unit on the side.

Manowar are the American defenders of the BAM spirit. The first thing you notice about them is their ludicrous image: they come on like dimestore barbarians in fur and swords, with violent primitive lyrics and imagery to match. The whole trip brings to mind the worst in mid-seventies pretense.

hard rock/hm, but plugged with a roaring, upbeat, punk-like buzz. Their latest, ***Play Dirty*** (Polygram), should be out by the time you read this. Likewise, **Fastway**—formed by Eddie Clarke after leaving Motorhead in 1982—are rife with standard moves, but capable of tackling their Zepesque screaming metal with zip and power. Many of the others you hear about—your **Krokuses**, **Twisted Sisters**, **Venoms**, **Motley Crues**, etc.—are the usual bullshit made over with a few predictable new moves, unextraordinary hypes caught (either conceptually or musically) in standard 1970s metal plod.

—Tim Sommer

Leather Angel. No need to speculate on what *they* do on the side.

THE HEAVY METAL CHOPPING BLOCK

Buncha hm releases coming down the chute here at our monster quadraphonic-equipped dungeon. Loud and fast with leather-bondage drag and fishnet stockings on the covers, most of these have everything a headbanger could want—except songs and originality. A few made it past our wimp and fake detection/torture devices, but only a few.

Americade's ***American Metal*** (Adem Records) should not be confused with Mike Varney's *U.S. Metal* series, and what's more, should be avoided at all cost. These guys are imposters—you won't catch them in a dark smoky club smelling of piss and leather, paying their dues, uh-uh. Beyond their cover of Grand Funk's "We're an American Band," there isn't enough energy coming off of these thirteen cuts to warm our brewskies.

Armored Saint and **Savage Grace**, with their EPs ***Armored Saint*** and ***The Dominatress***. (Enigma/Metal Blade) are a couple of screaming L.A. bar bands, coming across with two utterly predictable, completely interchangeable, loud, fast, and boring records.

Bitch's ***Be My Slave*** (Enigma/Metal Blade), fronted by Bondage Queen Betsy, is by one of Southern California's hottest hm acts. They're very lucky to have Mark Anthony Webb, one of the Great Bass Pounders of our time. We recommend you get really wasted and abuse yourself blind while listening to Betsy sing "Kick me in my shins, come on, slap me in my face."

From Holland, **Bodine** sends us ***Bold as Brass*** and ***Bodine III*** (WEA International)—refreshing, hot, kick-ass hm, ready to step into the big leagues. *Bold as Brass*, their second album, sets us to banging our noggins against our leather padded walls, while *Bodine III* goes and kicks its ass right out the window! Watch out for these wild men. Mad Man Axel's crazed throat work is hellfire for sure, and your neighbors will hate it.

Holy Diver by **Dio** (Warner Brothers) gives us singer Ronnie Dio, formerly the most laughable lyricist in heavy metal, forming his own band after stints with Rainbow and Black Sabbath. Wattsa matter, Ronnie, can't you get along with anybody? Wrong—this record is great hm and has hardly gotten off our turntable. How did he do it? First: a total change in attitude. Gone are his silly lyrics about castles and warlocks. In their place are some decidedly tuneful, humanistic songs. There's a force here that slams your ass while it takes the top of your head off. Second: Vinnie Appice (snatched from Black Sabbath), tasty powerhouse drum flogger. Third: Jimmy Bain, staunch bassmeister from Blackmore's Rainbow. Fourth: from Heaven comes Viv Campbell, unheard of outside his native Ireland, probably the smokinest lead player to drill our heads since the late, great Randy Rhodes of Ozzie Osborne's old band.

Dokken (Elektra/Asylum) combines guitarist George Lynch and drummer Mick Brown of Exciter, with vocalist Don Dokken, for some semi-ferocious, but mainly boring, Aryan metal. Lynch is a great player who could be a future hero for the 1980s, but not with this sappy bunch.

Joshua's ***The Hand Is Quicker Than the Eye*** (Olympic/Enigma) showcases the West Coast's foremost sweating guitarist, with a clean sound, good playing . . . solid rock, but not fully metalized. Could give Journey a run for their money.

Leather Angel's ***We Came to Kill*** (Enigma) maybe mashes your python-booted instep with their seven-inch heels (they're the self-proclaimed "Queens of Leather Rock"), but the album doesn't kick ass worth shit. If they didn't have tittles no one would be interested in this bunch of floozies—except maybe to drag them to a Motorhead concert. The only notable thing is the bum cover of Led Zep's "Whole Lotta Love," absolutely the worst bunch of crapola we've ever had to sit through. Nice production wasted on thin wimpy sounds.

Metal Massacre III (Metal Blade/Enigma) is a headbanger's assortment containing mostly mediocre nuggets. Warlord's "Mrs. Victoria" is great (they have a worthwhile EP of their own), and Tyrant's "The Battle of Armageddon" is a killer, though silly-as-shit. ***Metal Massacre IV***, however, comes up a couple of notches on our blood-spattered scale. Good cuts throughout, particularly Lizzy Borden's "Rod of Iron" and Sacred Blade's "The Alien."

How about: **Motley Crue**'s ***Shout at the Devil*** (Electra/Asylum), eh? This is probably the most image conscious of the new hm bands, kinda like the NY Dolls meet Black Sabbath. They seem more interested in schtupping broads than making music, and the only thing here that even comes close to being a song is a suck-ass cover of "Helter Skelter." Give it up, boys.

Ratt by **Ratt** (Enigma) is a powerful six-cut debut. True savages from L.A., these guys stand with Manowar as the best American hm to crunch our ears this year. And it's dedicated to dangerous women everywhere.

Slayer's ***Show No Mercy*** (Enigma) is either the meanest hm band in the world, or the funniest hm joke we've ever heard. This one's so loud and tight and fast it makes hardcore punks reach for the Geritol. If you think you're truly sick, try this one on for size.

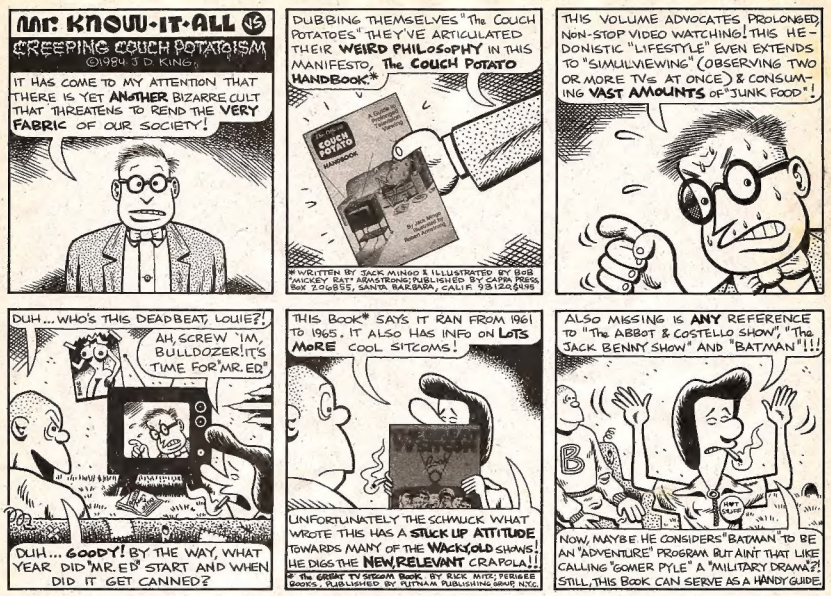
Talas brings us ***Live Speed On Ice*** (Combat), some very good hm from Upstate New York. Bassist Billy Sheehan is the greatest metal bass killer of all, and the new Talas lineup is very strong. Good tunes, great chops, lots of classic hm influences.

The Rods Live (Combat). The Rod's guitarist, David "Rock" Feinstein, is a pretty good Ritchie Blackmore (Deep Purple, Rainbow) imitator, and his band is a good imitation of hm. We think they mean well, but they don't say it so good.

OZ, Fire In the Brain (Combat). Lotsa fun; kicks ass with guitar work to bring you to your wimpy knees. These guys are tops in Sweden, where they've been melting the brains of blond-headed headbangers for five years.

—Josh Ribakove and Jeff Schalles

(Enigma: P.O. Box 2896, Torrance, CA 90509; Combat: 149-03 Guy R. Brewer Blvd., Jamaica, NY 11434.)


MR. KNOW-IT-ALL VS CREEPING COUCH POTATOISM
©1984 J.D. KING
IT HAS COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT THERE IS YET ANOTHER BIZARRE CULT THAT THREATENS TO REND THE VERY FABRIC OF OUR SOCIETY!
DUBBING THEMSELVES "THE COUCH POTATOES" THEY'VE ARTICULATED THEIR WEIRD PHILOSOPHY IN THIS MANIFESTO, THE COUCH POTATO HANDBOOK.*
THE COUCH POTATO HANDBOOK
*WRITTEN BY JACK MINGO & ILLUSTRATED BY BOB "MICKEY RAT" ARMSTRONG; PUBLISHED BY CAPRA PRESS, BOX 2068SS, SANTA BARBARA, CALIF. 93120
THIS VOLUME ADVOCATES PROLONGED NON-STOP VIDEO WATCHING! THIS HEDONISTIC "LIFESTYLE" EVEN EXTENDS TO "SIMULVIEWING" (OBSERVING TWO OR MORE TVs AT ONCE) & CONSUMING VAST AMOUNTS OF "JUNK FOOD"!
DUH... WHO'S THIS DEADBEAT, LOUIE?!
AH, SCREW 'IM, BULLDOZER! IT'S TIME FOR "MR. ED"
DUH... GOODY! BY THE WAY, WHAT YEAR DID "MR. ED" START AND WHEN DID IT GET CANNED?
THIS BOOK* SAYS IT RAN FROM 1961 TO 1965. IT ALSO HAS INFO ON LOTS MORE COOL SITCOMS!
UNFORTUNATELY THE SCHMUCK WHAT WROTE THIS HAS A STUCK UP ATTITUDE TOWARDS MANY OF THE WACKY OLD SHOWS! HE DIGS THE NEW, RELEVANT CRAPOLA!!
* THE GREAT TV SITCOM BOOK BY RICK MITZ; PERIGEE BOOKS, PUBLISHED BY PUTNAM PUBLISHING GROUP, N.Y.C.
ALSO MISSING IS ANY REFERENCE TO "THE ABBOT & COSTELLO SHOW", "THE JACK BENNY SHOW" AND "BATMAN"!!!
NOW, MAYBE HE CONSIDERS "BATMAN" TO BE AN "ADVENTURE" PROGRAM, BUT AIN'T THAT LIKE CALLING "GOMER PYLE" A "MILITARY DRAMA"?
STILL, THIS BOOK CAN SERVE AS A HANDY GUIDE.

FOREWARNED AND FOURARMED

A few pages into **David Gerrold**'s ***A Matter for Men*** (Timescape), a soldier with a scoped rifle blows a six-year-old's brains out. We shortly learn that this was necessary because a giant purple worm from outer space was about to gobble her alive. Earth has, you see, been invaded, and unless we get tough, we're all gonna be food for worms, as G. Gordon Liddy put it.

Liddy would like this book. The shooting is the first in a steadily escalating series of godawful means justified by their end, which is presumably Our Survival. The worms are totally hostile, don't like Dan Fogelberg or Alan Alda, and so we *have to kill them*, which means we will all have to become men and put away such childish things as pacifism and dissent. Any character who disagrees is shouted down as a dummy, or killed as a good example: We are *right*, you see, so shut up and load your flamethrower.

This essay in Destroying It In Order To Save It is being praised by intelligent and liberal people, and indeed if technical competence is goodness, it is good—just like *Triumph of the Will*—but for this reporter it went down like a barium milkshake.

The metatitle for this book and its three promised sequels is "The War against the Chtorr," but of course it isn't a war, any more than spraying roaches is a war. It's a response to an intractable threat, a response so classically fascist-authoritarian that one wonders if the worms have been reading Marighela's *Mini-Manual for the Urban Guerilla*.

Now why (he said) should we be getting books like this just now? I don't mean war stories, of course. A war story can say anything: one of the best war novels ever written is sf (Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War*. Go read it). But there is a varicose vein of militarist-authoritarianism in current sf, a black fin knifing the waters.

We are a good audience for threat-response stories these days. We all know about the street punks, death squads, and Quaddafi. Counterforce starts looking good. And Dirty Harry is packin' again, and packin' 'em in downtown.

In **Timothy Zahn**'s ***The Blackcollar*** (DAW), it's already too late for the diplomatic option: Earth has been conquered by an alien race, who rule through a bureaucracy of human finks. (Boo! Hiss!) Only the super-guerillas called Blackcollars can free mankind from—

You know this one: Europe is crawling with Nazis, but if Errol Flynn and Ronald Reagan can make contact with the Resistance, they can save the D-Day plans and steal the new V-weapon prototype to boot. Zahn does absolutely nothing with this story that Ron and Errol didn't. Strength and muscle and jungle work triumph, and sequels look inevitable.

This is barely sf to begin with, which keeps its message clear: a few guys can make the world safe and free again, if they're only *tough enough*—i.e. kill enough Nazis/aliens (choose you favorite imperialist aggressor).

Star Rebel by **F. M. Busby** (Bantam) is pure-quill Nietzsche: "That which does not kill us makes us stronger." It's about a bad dude getting bad, growing up in places called The Slaughterhouse with guys named The Butcher, learning to kick ass and take names. Busby's universe is a Corporate

> **"There is a varicose vein of militarist-authoritarianism in current sf."**

Tyranny Mk 1 Mod 0 (though at least based in good ol' human greed instead of alien dominance impulses), unleavened by any humor (not counting lines like "Korbeith might be a sadistic murdering son of a sow, but Bran had to admit that the Butcher knew his tactics.")

Economic Man can play this game, too. Kees vaan Loo-Macklin, ***The Man Who Used the Universe*** (Warner), starts out with a heart of stone, and a personality to match. The latest by **Alan Dean Foster**, sf/f's one-man synthesizer-pop band, is a rogue's progress in which the antihero swindles, stabs, and sells out everyboay on his way to The Top. This could have been good dirty fun, *Flashman in Space*, even *Robert Vesco in Space*. Instead it's dull, driven on only by the cover promise that Loo-Macklin has an Ultimate Aim; you know, a surprise ending where we find out What It Was All

Jerry Lewis out of character.

Lewis: "I hate the critics. All of them."

Really For. I won't reveal the Aim, not because I'm a noble reviewer but because it's so dumb you wouldn't believe me. At least it doesn't threaten any sequels.

Clan and Crown by **Jerry Pournelle** and **Roland Green** (Ace) is a shapeless, pointless sequel to the shapeless, pointless *Janissaries*. Well, the first one was a bestseller, and if you liked it, you'll *love* this one: it's got the same wargamer's-wet-dream mix of knights and mercenaries, swords and machine guns, and sexy, allegedly intelligent women who melt into slush in a Real Man's clutch. There still isn't any plot, just incidents strung together, battles (with maps), boring scheming, and brooding about, leading up to a *deus ex machina* and enough loose ends for a dozen more books. This isn't a novel, it's a soap opera.

And then there's **H. Beam Piper**, who had a real sense of satire, something utterly absent from all the other books I've run down here. (Before reading ***Uller Uprising***, look up the Sepoy Mutiny, and skip the two introductions Ace puts on the book. In fact, skip *all* of John F. Carr's term-paper introductions to the Ace Piper reprints.)

Piper understood history as a process—way the hell different from just knowing it as facts—and his stories, though frequently about war, are never idiot celebrations of the martial virtues. ***The Worlds of H. Beam Piper*** proves that in detail. ***Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen*** makes all the ***Janissaries*** volumes irrelevant, and makes clear that the trouble with the end justifying the means is that the means very often change the end.

—Walter Gerlach

NAHALLYWOOD

There were four film personalities that helped me get through my childhood: Walt Disney, Laurel and Hardy (they count as one—to a pre-teen, Stanaonllie is a single, two-headed entity), Boris Karloff (if you want to get your parents to go easy at report card time, shamble into the room chanting "Weeee bee-long dead" a couple of times) and **Jerry Lewis**.

More than any other comic persona of the 1950s and 1960s, Lewis represented everychild. He was both clever and silly, streetwise and naive. As half of the Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis team, he starred in a series of perfectly servicable comedies, but it wasn't until his first solo effort in 1957, ***The Delicate Delinquent***, that Lewis's true talent at inspired silliness shone through.

His career has had its ups and downs since then, with his movies ranging from the slapstick sublime (***The Errand Boy***, ***The Bell Boy***, ***The Nutty Professor***) to the submoronic (***Boeing-Boeing***, ***Way Way Out***).

Lewis, at his best, is a special brand of exclamation points and inspired insanity. I recently had a chance to interview him during a tour touting his latest (and probably oddest) film (as actor only) in Kurt Vonnegut's ***Slapstick of Another Kind***. He was just as nice as Disney and Stanaonllie, and a lot better looking than Karloff.

—Ed Naha

HM: When I look at past Jerry Lewis movies, I see a lot of fantasy elements there, a kind of fantasy that both appealed to kids as being magical and adults as being clever.

JL: That's always been my sneaky way of doing things. I used to tell the studio executives that I was writing a film for my audience and that used to keep them happy. If you presume my audience to be kids, fine. But who brings the kids to the theater? Adults. There are a lot of adults who love Jerry Lewis movies. They like that magic. But for an adult to *say* that he likes a Jerry Lewis movie is like stepping on the American flag.

They just gave me a great honor in France. They gave me the Commander of Arts and Letters award. I'm going to go back to get the Legion of Honor. When *The New York Times* reported that, they began by saying that "there are three things that France and America will never agree on: food, politics, and Jerry Lewis."

That's sensational but it's so true. Nobody here, in terms of movie critics, can fathom what that's all about. If they got off their butts and came over and looked, maybe they'd catch on.

What we do—by we, I mean whoever there is left who does my kind of nonsense—is so low-brow that critics perceive it as being beneath them to even watch it. Critics believe slapstick is an art form that was strictly Keystone Cops and died around 1919. But in *The Sting*, Paul Newman playing cards with the gambler is one of the most marvelous slapstick scenes I've ever seen. Critics enjoyed it. Why? You wouldn't call Paul Newman a slapstick performer. You'd never even presume he'd do such a lowbrow thing. So, it got by the American critics safely.

I'm in a crazy situation. I love working with the press. I do it more, probably get more coverage, than any other performer in this business. I know the importance of the printed word. I respect the press. I hate the critics. All of them.

What I'm trying to get across in my films, and what most of them refuse to understand, is that I'm trying to filmically defend a valid artform. I don't give a damn what

Lewis and Madeline Kahn with Marty Feldman. The cast goes home to relax.

"Can I eat your make-up?" Jerry Lewis and Madeline Kahn in *Slapstick of Another Kind*.

Lewis: "I'm equally disturbed at an Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences that does not have a category for comedy."

you write about me as long as you spell my name right but, goddamn it, don't ignore slapstick comedy. Write about Stan Laurel. Write about Chaplin. If it wasn't for Chaplin, there wouldn't be a *Terms of Endearment*. Don't forget Ham Hamilton, Larry Semon, Harry Langdon. They were giants who taught us what to do with a camera.

Think about slapstick comedy for a minute. There is *nothing* that can't be done on camera. *Everything* can defy logic. I have such a religious regard for the men who worked in slapstick before me. I am proud to participate in the school of comedy that they started. Critics here think I'm pissed at them because they don't like my work. No. I'm pissed because they don't like any of that work!

I'm equally disturbed at an Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences that does not have a category for comedy. Now, come on. This is 1984. If it wasn't for Mack Sennet, the Keystone Cops, Laurel and Hardy, and all those fellows, we wouldn't have half the techniques we use today to produce our best dramas and best foreign films. We wouldn't have the technique to film Paul Newman in *The Sting*. But we don't have a category for those people. We don't have a category for the art of comedy.

HM: That's interesting because, in 1984, people seem to really want to laugh. Yet the type of movie that seems to elude filmmakers the most is good, solid comedy.

JL: Comedy is the toughest thing to do. You can take a scene out of *Death of a Salesman*, you can take those printed words and film them and have it affect your audience. When you film comedy, you're shooting blind. What you haven't got, during a movie comedy, is the response of an audience to tell you what works and what doesn't.

Without an audience, a comedy piece is worthless. Try to go dancing if your girlfriend doesn't show up. That's what we're talking about . . . although I know a lot of guys now who would probably get off on that.

Plus, with comedy, you're always isolated emotionally. To have to go to the studio when your baby is home sick and make silly faces and make a complete idiot of yourself on the screen to earn a living is very, very tough. As funny as the scene may be, it's tough. If you're a straight actor doing a drama you can leave your house and your sick baby, arrive at the studio, and take all that pain to a hell of a performance.

That's why there are only ten people or so in this world who can do what I do. That's why there are only two films in a hundred that spark laughter.

We have 25,000 actors in this town that could do the role I did in *The King of Comedy*. But we ain't got five that can do the other roles that I do.

HM: When I think of your "other" roles, usually I think about characters who are zany, very magical, yet somehow are everyman characters.

JL: Right. The fantasy qualities are a given. They triumph over everything by the end of the movie.

HM: When you first look at it, the coupling of Jerry Lewis-Everyman with Kurt Vonnegut seems odd. What was it that made you want to do *Slapstick*?

JL: Just that. The fact that it was such an off-the-wall idea. I'm not a Vonnegut fan. I wish I could say I was. There are some things that he's written that I really enjoy but, let's face it, he doesn't write for me. Just as I don't perform for him. Vonnegut is the Sardi's group. I go to the Automat.

But I was so intrigued that he and I could collaborate, I couldn't say no.

The movie is very unusual. It's not a comedy. I can't, in all good faith, say it's a wonderful movie. It's very *strange* but not necessarily funny.

HM: Were you nervous doing a movie like this?

JL: I was very concerned. It was an independent film directed by a twenty-five-year-old kid who had never directed before. But Steven Paul, the director, is marvelous. He's a *wunderkind*. He started plaguing my office when he was eighteen. We shake thirty or forty of them out of the office every single day. They either want to see the Messiah part the water or make a stupid face. They want to see if it's real. Does it talk? Does it move? After three years of throwing him out of the office, my manager said: "Jerry, I'm looking at a kid that's you thirty years ago."

He was right. When I was Steven's age, there wasn't anyone who could stop me from doing the movies I wanted to do. If Paramount—my studio at the time—wouldn't back me, I'd put up my own money. I was pretty determined.

I started watching Steven. I saw some of the best of what I was at twenty-one and some of the worst. And you'll never find anyone as ruthlessly honest as I am. That's why I'm always in trouble.

I sat down and talked very frankly about this movie with him and just was knocked out. There was no way I was not going to do his movie. I hated the script. It didn't make any sense. It still doesn't.

HM: OK. You've just done a Vonnegut film, a cult movie. Last year, you did a dramatic turn in *The King of Comedy* and the critics loved it. You're lionized in France. Why can't you just walk into a Hollywood studio and say, "Here's a script I wrote. It's as crazy as *The Nutty Professor*. Let me make it."

JL: Why? Because the business has changed since I made *The Nutty Professor*, *The Errand Boy*, and *The Bell Boy*. It hasn't changed for the better, either. I won't prostitute myself just to make a movie.

A lot of people in Hollywood just don't understand what I do. A few years ago, they brought me the script to *Portnoy's Complaint*. They wanted me to star in it. The producer sat in my office and said, "Nobody would ever believe that I met you in *your* office."

I just sat there. "You don't know me. You don't know anything about me. You think I'd be good in your movie. And I would. But I don't know how to play Phillip Roth's idea of satire. I don't know how to jerk off on camera. It embarrasses me. I'm offended by it. I don't think it's funny and you don't have enough money to get me to do this."

He didn't hear a word I said. He just offered me a better deal. I said, "Look. You don't understand. Behind my desk is a picture of my six sons. I have never done anything in my career that would embarrass them. I won't now."

He got up to leave. "I'll call you tomorrow. Think it over."

I've had scripts sent to me recently where I was supposed to play psychopathic killers. A comedy guy who performs matricide. Studios are sending me these scripts. *Those* are the same people I'm supposed to go and see about doing a comedy?

As a result, I can't get a movie made in Hollywood. I tell you how I could, though. If I came in with an idea that I told them they could advertise as "Jerry Lewis plays a homosexual who is in love with a guy who is in love with a girl and they all live together," I'd have a deal in about nine minutes.

HM: OK. Hollywood has become the *National Lampoon* version of big business. Where can Jerry Lewis go to get a picture made? Would you consider going to Europe, like Charlie Chaplin, to get your movies made?

JL: I'm beginning to think of that seriously. I just appeared in one French film, *To Catch a Cop*, and I'm doing another one this spring. Gaumont Films in Paris has given me an open ticket to produce,

direct, write, and star in a movie. I'm working on a script now. I may do it. It's very tempting. I wouldn't feel funny about working over there. I wouldn't be leaving my country. I'd be leaving Hollywood.

I mean, I love what I do. I love making movies. I can't walk into a studio here and seriously talk to a young putz behind a desk who's just come out of Harvard Law School. Here's a guy who was taught how to make ball bearings, stays for shirts, and how to sell shoelaces without the tips on them and . . . oh yeah, movies.

I have so much fun doing what I do. And, when things do get very ridiculous around me, the secret of my sanity—if you want to call me sane—is that I get to expound on this every so often like this. This clears everything out of my system.

HM: You still love comedy?

JL: I love making comedies. And I still love watching comedies. Look at Frank Capra's work. I watch his movies and I'm so jealous. I love them so much I'm jealous. It's okay to be jealous. It's terrible to be envious. When you're jealous of someone else's skill, you push yourself more. You try to be more creative.

How can you top Jimmy Stewart in *It's a Wonderful Life* matching wits with his guardian angel? "Ernie. Ernie? Don't you know me? It's George." I cry every time it's on.

The characterization in movies like that! Can you find that in *Porky's*? The audience today isn't being written for. It used to be that when you'd write a movie, you'd have a specific audience in mind, but today? It's hard to figure out who the audience is. Are they drugged out or what? If they are, I don't know how to write for that audience. I can't sabotage my work to appeal to the people who like a lot of the movies that are out today.

HM: Why don't you get cracking and make another movie in Europe?

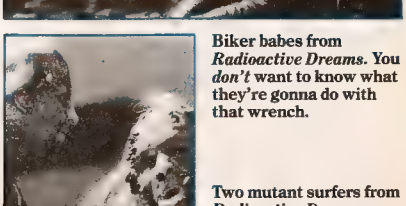
JL: I will. I think I just may do that. I'm working on a script now, and I'm finally writing a sequel to *The Nutty Professor*. I'll probably shoot that on my own. There are a lot of things I still want to do. I'll do them, too.

Lewis: "I don't give a damn what you write about me as long as you spell my name right."

THE METAL PROJECTOR

S*treets of Fire* director **Walter Hill** has recruited **Richard Pryor** to star in *Brewster's Millions*. In this remake, Pryor will inherit a fortune if he can spend $30 million in 30 days. No problem, Richard—rent an apartment in New York . . . The Police's resident hairdo, **Sting**, will again work with director **Franc Roddam** (*Quadrophenia*) in his twist on the Frankenstein legend, *The Bride*. In this one, Dr. Frankenstein creates a *woman*. Roddam is currently searching for the monstrous playmate . . . Oh yeah, and in case you were wondering, shooting has completed on *Frankenstein's Great Aunt Tillie*, a quantum leap forward in American cinema, we're sure, starring **Donald Pleasance** and **Zsa Zsa Gabor** . . . In other *B*-movie news—it's too late for a quarantine: *Rockenstein, Hard Rock Zombies*, and **Pia Zadora**'s *Voyage of the Rock Aliens* are spreading to your areas . . . **Larry Cohen** (Q, *It's Alive*) is preparing *Special Effects*, starring *Ms. 45* herself, **Zoe Tamerlis** . . . **Wes Craven**, who dropped us off at the *Last House on the Left*, moves to a new neighborhood in *Nightmare on Elm Street* . . . Conan, the Interfacer? Sort of. *Ragewar* will pit a young computer genius against a sword and sorcery wizard . . . Computer and video game stories look like they're shaping up to be the Beach Party movies of the eighties. Rock video director **Steve Barron** (the "Billie Jean" video) makes his feature film debut with *Electric Dreams*, a love triangle in which a computer does a Cyrano de Bergerac routine, with music by **Culture Club**, **Heaven 17**, and **Giorgio Moroder**. (Moroder also just bought the Fritz Lang 1926 classic *Metropolis*, which he will score and tint in color with reconstructed lost footage) . . . Another rock video veteran, **Russel Mulcahy** (the Duran Duran perpetrator), also debuts with *Razorback* . . . **James Horner** is composing the score to *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*. Horner, you recall, also scored *Trek II*. Music mavens should also note that **Genesis**'s **Tony Banks** will score the electronic soundtrack to this December's *2010: Odyssey Two* . . . **Sean Penn** is Edgar Allan in *Poe*, which traces the writer's Paris days. **David Bowie**'s being terrorized to play Daupin, Poe's Parisian partner. But don't hold your breath; after months of sizzling rumors, Bowie *will* reportedly co-star in the new James Bond, *From a View to a Kill* . . . *Splash*'s **Daryl Hannah** will star in *Clan of the Cave Bear* as the prehistoric gal who's too sharp for her cromagnon buddies and is exiled by her tribe. Talk about peer pressure . . . Producers **Richard Zanuck** and **David Brown** (*Jaws*) will have a *Surprise Party*, the story of a girl who marries an all-American boy and discovers he's, uh, been watching too many Hitchcock movies . . . Expect further torrents of **Stephen King** films this fall. Between campaigning for Gary Hart and writing the *Cycle of the Werewolf* script for Dino DeLaurentiis, he's already announced *The Body*, based on his semi-autobiographical short story, in which four kids share a *memorable* day in the outdoors. And **George Romero**, while wrapping the *Night of the Living Dead* trilogy finale, *Day of the Dead*, will script and direct *Creepshow II*, from King short stories. Even better, King and **Steven Spielberg** have their heads together on a secret something . . . Speaking of Spielberg, he'll try to act in his newest movie, *Gremlins* . . . Punk movie dominatrix **Penelope Spheeris** (*The Decline of Western Civilization*), with her great new movie *Suburbia* in release, plans another wonderful sickie, *Boy Child*, in which a young lady has an abortion that doesn't quite take, and, well, Momma decides to keep it. Spheeris says it's a cross between *E.T.* and *The Elephant Man*. See what listening to all those Circle Jerks albums full-blast will do to you? . . . **Steve Martin** screws up **Lily Tomlin**'s black magic ritual in this August's *All of Me* and receives her soul—and her annoying habits . . . *Tigerbeat* stud **Tom Cruise** (*Risky Business*), **Tim Curry** (*Rocky Horror*), and assorted goblins, unicorns, and faeries are all currently in England shooting **Ridley Scott**'s *Legend* . . . In *The Sword and the Sorcerer* director **Albert F. Pyun**'s *Radioactive Dreams*, "Phillip Hammer" and "Marlow Chandler" (get it?) are two four-year-olds locked in a bomb shelter with only a library of 1940s detective novels. Fifteen years later, they tunnel out with Mom's silverware and find that the only survivors of the nuclear holocaust are cultural deviants—tribes of bikers, punks, hippies, surfers—and our two teenage mystery buffs try to figure it out . . . *E.T.*'s **Henry Thomas** is the boy-who-cried-wolf when he witnesses the murder of an FBI agent in **Richard Franklin**'s (*Psycho II*) *Cloak and Dagger*. **Dabney Coleman** (*WarGames* and "Buffalo Bill") is his imaginary superspy buddy who reinstates the kid's credibility.

—Ed Naha and Steven Maloff

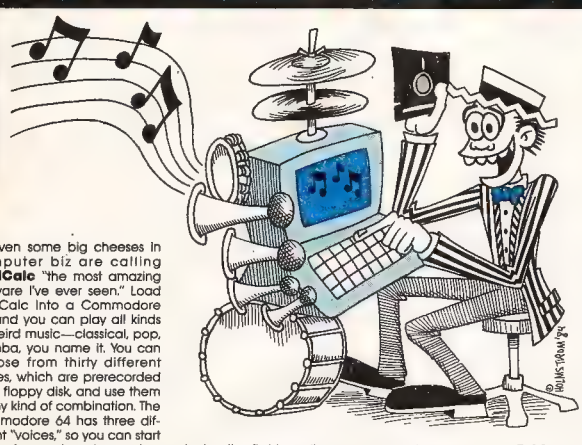


Biker babes from *Radioactive Dreams*. You *don't* want to know what they're gonna do with that wrench.

Two mutant surfers from *Radioactive Dreams* discuss their suntan lotion preferences. (Special makeup Effects by Greg Cannom.)

JOHN HOLMSTROM'S

HI-TECH LOWDOWN



Even some big cheeses in computer biz are calling **MusiCalc** "the most amazing software I've ever seen." Load MusiCalc into a Commodore 64, and you can play all kinds of weird music—classical, pop, rhumba, you name it. You can choose from thirty different scores, which are prerecorded on a floppy disk, and use them in any kind of combination. The Commodore 64 has three different "voices," so you can start with a bass voice, drum voice, and a horn voice. You can alter and adjust each one until you have a sax, flute, and xylophone. Or make strange synthesizer sounds, like buzzes, farts, or buzzsaw noises. Trained musicians can use the MusiCalc system to transcribe a song from sheet music directly onto the computer, or to create a score and make a printout of it. Musical illiterates can play with it, pushing buttons at random and seeing what happens.

MusiCalc takes advantage of Commodore 64's amazing SID chip. The Sound Interface Device is an electronic synthesizer on a chip—a tiny piece of silicon smaller than your fingernail. MusiCalc gives a C-64, which has listed for as little as $100, the capabilities of synthesizers that sell in music shops for thousands of bucks! Then there's MusiCalc 2, which synchronizes MusiCalc 1 to drum machines, echo machines, or other MusiCalc systems. And MusiCalc 3, which enables you to create your own personal keyboard on your C-64. There's even separate African/Latin rhythym, new wave, and rock disks. You can be a one-man hardcore band!

There are over thirty different music programs for home computers, but MusiCalc is definitely the best.

In other computer/music news, **Dragon's Lair** mastermind **Rick Dyer** is busy producing the first laserdisc game for the home, called **Thayer's Quest**. **Mark Volman** and **Howard Kaylan** (remember the Turtles from the sixties?) have recorded the soundtrack on a new synthesizer—the 360 system.

Thayer's Quest will be an animated adventure, similar to Dragon's Lair and Space Ace. One big difference is that Don Bluth will not be doing the animation. It will be done in-house by Dyer himself. The other big difference is that instead of joystick control, you talk the characters through the game, telling them what to do at crucial points of the game. The cost of developing this revolutionary game system is around $2 million.

Right now, Rick Dyer's searching for a music group to handle the soundtrack for his latest game—a horror video that will use live action instead of animation.

Meanwhile, back in the arcades, the trend of home video/computer games following the action in the arcades is kaput. Home computer games are the new frontier. **Exidy**, an arcade game company whose last hit was Death Race 2000 in the seventies, has entered into a licensing agreement with **First Star**, a computer games company recently purchased by Warner Communications. This could do for Exidy what Dragon's Lair did for Cinematronics, the one-time arcade giant rescued from bankruptcy by Dragon's Lair's astounding success.

One of the first home-game translations to hit the arcades, around the beginning of June, will be **Boulder Dash**. It stars Rockford the Ant, who runs around the screen eating dirt, dropping rocks, stealing jewels, fighting butterflies, and trapping amoebas. The home version features sixteen different game screens, each of which contains different elements of game play. There are also four playable intermissions (a first in game design!)—which is like twenty games for the price of one!!

Even though laserdisc games have proved to be a big bore—and are pretty much dying in the arcades—20th Century-Fox, Paramount, and MCA are shooting extra scenes for some of their new movies, hoping to turn them into arcade games.

Rumors are flying that a computer shakeout—similar to the video game shakeout a few years ago—will soon separate the sheep from the goats in the home hacking biz. Coleco has given up on the Adam computer, which hasn't received any attention from software companies (so there are no good games or programs for it beyond what Coleco itself makes). Atari has been in big trouble for a long time (anybody who'd sign Alan Alda to a ten-year, $10 million contract *should* be). Commodore, IBM, Apple, and Radio Shack seem to be the only computer companies likely to survive.

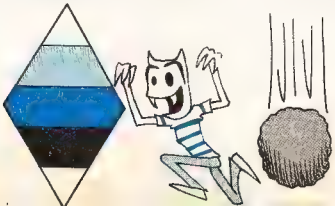
A crash in the computer biz could prove very interesting—companies might be forced to reduce prices to cut their losses. (Like Texas Instruments, who sold their TI-99s for around $35 apiece after going out of business. Suddenly, people who weren't sure about buying one couldn't afford not to.)

Crash or not, electronic devices—computers, robots, and peripherals, are all bound to come way down in price over the next ten years.

—John Holmstrom

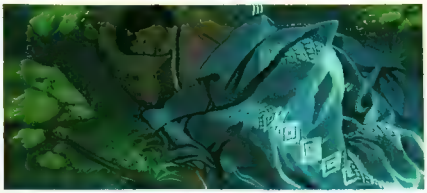
MusiCalc is available from: Waveform Corporation, 1912 Bonita Way, Berkeley, CA 94704.

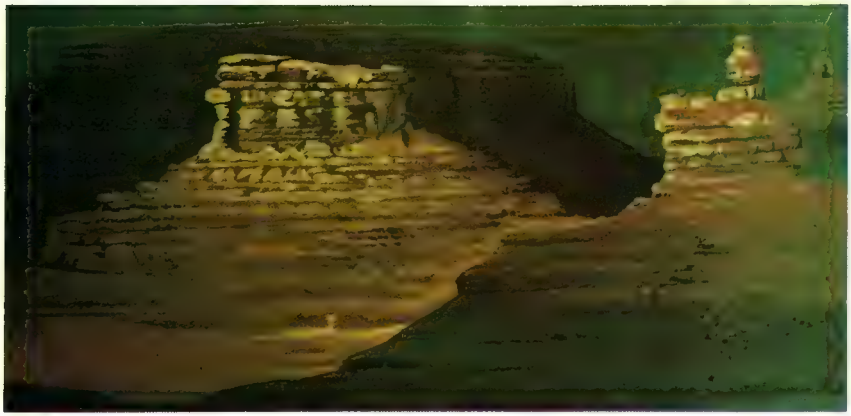
(John Holmstrom, HM's resident game shark and technocrat for the last two years, recently became Associate Editor of K-Power, *Scholastic's computer magazine for young people. We're all very proud of him here, but not half as much as his mother, who can hold her head up now that her boy has a decent job. His Hi-Tech Lowdown column, however, will continue to appear here bi-monthly. Sorry, Mom.—ls)*

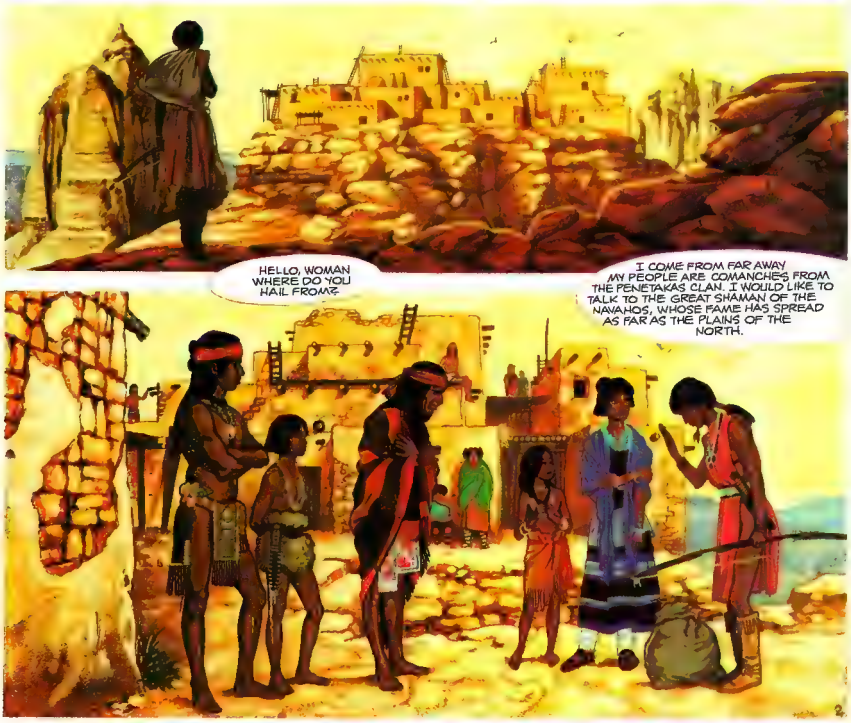


THE GREAT PASSAGE

by Jeronaton






HELLO, WOMAN WHERE DO YOU HAIL FROM?
I COME FROM FAR AWAY. MY PEOPLE ARE COMANCHES, FROM THE PENETAKAS CLAN. I WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO THE GREAT SHAMAN OF THE NAVAHOS, WHOSE FAME HAS SPREAD AS FAR AS THE PLAINS OF THE NORTH.

THE APACHES AND THE COMANCHES SPEAK OF YOUR GREAT KNOWLEDGE, O SHAMAN. PLEASE TELL ME WHERE I CAN FIND MY BELOVED BROTHER KOTSOTA. HE CAME HERE TO FIND YOU. I DON'T BELIEVE THAT HE DISAPPEARED DURING A HUNT, AS I WAS TOLD.
YES, YES, I DO REMEMBER HIM. HE WAS A YOUNG, COURAGEOUS MAN. HE LEFT THIS VILLAGE IN SEARCH OF THE GOD KUKAR. HE WANTED TO TAKE KUKAR TO YOUR TRIBE. KUKAR CAME FROM THE SOUTH, VERY FAR AWAY. TRAVELERS CLAIM THE PEOPLE THERE ARE WISE AND INTELLIGENT. THEY SEEM TO KNOW A LOT MORE THAN I COULD EVER HOPE TO KNOW. BUT I'M AFRAID IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL YOU EXACTLY WHAT PATH YOUR BROTHER TOOK.
KOTSOTA WAS ALWAYS SWEET AND GOOD TO ME. I WANT TO FIND HIM, WHETHER HE IS DEAD OR ALIVE. HELP ME, I BEG OF YOU.
THE PATH YOU MUST FOLLOW IS THE PATH WITH A HEART. THAT IS WHY I AM GOING TO ASK MY MASTER, THE PEYOTL* TO ADVISE YOU. ARE YOU PREPARED FOR A LONG TRIP? READY TO TAKE RISKS? TO POSSIBLY ENCOUNTER A THOUSAND DANGERS, PERHAPS TO DEFY THE GODS, TO POSSIBLY EVEN DIE?

*THE MYSTIC BEING WHO SOMETIMES APPEARS TO THOSE WHO ARE IN A PEYOTE-INDUCED TRANCE.

MY PARENTS WERE KILLED DURING A RAID LAUNCHED ON OUR CAMP BY THE TANIMAS. EVER SINCE THEN, MY BROTHER HAS TAKEN CARE OF ME LIKE A FATHER. HE HAS SAVED MY LIFE SEVERAL TIMES AND TAUGHT ME ABOUT THE BEAUTY OF THINGS. I OWE HIM EVERYTHING. BESIDES, A PENATEKA COMANCHE WOMAN IS NEVER AFRAID.
4

HELLO, TOPSANNAH!

I AM THE SPIRIT OF PEYOTL. IF YOU TRUST ME, YOUR TRIP SHALL BE A SAFE ONE. I WILL TRY TO HELP YOU. KOTSOTA JOURNEYED TO THE SOUTH, BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS AND THE GREAT DESERT IN A COUNTRY WHERE THE TOLTECS REIGN. THEY DON'T LIVE IN TENTS MADE OF SKINS LIKE YOUR PEOPLE DO. THE TOLTECS ARE MASTERS OF GOLD, OF PRECIOUS STONES, AND OF THE PEN.
THEIR VILLAGES ARE SO FAR AWAY AND THE OBSTACLES SO NUMEROUS THAT FOR YOU TO GO THERE BY FOOT WOULD BE CERTAIN SUICIDE. I HAVE DECIDED TO LEND YOU THE BODY OF AN EAGLE, MY CHILD.

TO BE CONTINUED.

JOHN CLEESE

All He Has to Do, Is Please Himself

John Cleese has no ambition. At least that's what a close friend of Cleese's suggests when I wonder out loud why he isn't a major star. That is—after all—the question that troubles fans of the founding member of Monty Python who went on to solo acclaim as the palpitating Basil in "Fawlty Towers." Yet, despite that and despite film credits that include *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, *Life of Brian*, *The Meaning of Life*, and most recently *Privates on Parade*, John Cleese remains generally a cult figure in the U.S. The irony is that to today's consumers, Cleese is probably best known only as a voice hawking Kronenbourg beer and British toffee on Top Forty radio.

But is it fame that has eluded Cleese or Cleese who has eluded fame? Born in 1939 in Weston-super-Mare, John Marwood Cleese (the son of an insurance salesman) was educated at private schools before going on to Cambridge to study for a career in law, a plan he abandoned after scoring a hit as the star of Cambridge's Footlights revue. A stint as a writer/performer on BBC followed, and in 1969 Cleese, along with Terry Jones, Graham Chapman, Eric Idle, Terry Gilliam, and Michael Palin, formed the now legendary troupe that was Monty Python's Flying Circus. He went on to perform in almost all the Python-related films in addition to directing the stage shows for *The Secret Policeman's Ball* and its sequel. Somewhere along the line, he took the time out to star as Petruccio in Jonathan Miller's BBC production of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

What does this record prove? Perhaps only that given the choice John Cleese prefers to do something entirely different. Or to do nothing at all ("Work is highly overrated," he says.). Presently, he prefers staying at home in Holland Park, a London suburb, with wife Barbara and their newborn daughter, Camilla.

Will fame spoil Cleese's controlled anonymity? Not if he can help it.

—James Verniere

HM: Your new film, *Privates on Parade*, is about a troupe of soldier/performers putting on shows in the Burmese jungle in the late forties. I've heard it described as a tropical *La Cage Aux Folles*. How did you get involved?

JC: First, let me say that I was miffed when I looked at my wardrobe and realized that I was going to be the only person who didn't get to wear dresses. I got involved because of the director, Michael Blakemore, who is an old friend of mine. We once made a short film a long time ago for the BBC, which was a study of the BBC canteen. As I recall, dogs' turds figured prominently.

A scene from
PRIVATES ON PARADE

"Of the comics I grew up loving, at least two-thirds of them were Americans."

HM: Sounds like the inspiration for the restaurant scene in *The Meaning of Life*.

JC: Yes, I suppose it was now that I think about it.

HM: Where did you film *Privates*?

JC: It's interesting that you should ask. The whole thing was filmed twenty miles outside of London. We just made do with a few plastic palm trees and some huts. We shot it in a Gurkha camp that was built in the thirties in the architecture of the actual colonial encampments. It was built for a Gurkha regiment, and these same Gurkhas were sent over to the Falklands while we were filming. It was very odd. During the first week, we had our caravans on one side of the camp—temperamental actors putting on lipstick. On the other side, were these caravans being packed with Gurkhas going off to war in the South Atlantic. We actually waved them off to war. And in fact there's a scene in the film in which Gurkha soldiers draw their knives and charge our stage. Well, you see they have a rule that once they draw their knives they cannot put them back until they have shed blood. But we waved the rule for the film.

HM: *Privates*, like many Python films, was produced by Denis O'Brien and George Harrison, who own Handmade Films. How did you become involved with them?

JC: When we were trying to find the cash to make *Life of Brian* we actually got turned down by every single studio in America. We did have an English studio, EMI, who was going to back it, but unfortunately one of them read the script, and that was the end of that. We then thought that we'd never get to make the film. But Eric Idle, who has always been a great friend of George Harrison's, gave it to George, and one day we got a call saying, "Well, you know. Let's make it." We said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "I'll put the two million up." Later, when somebody asked him why he backed the film, he said, "I wanted to see it."

HM: Was that the first time O'Brien and Harrison had backed a Python-related project?

JC: Yes, that's right. Since then they've also done *Time Bandits*, *Privates*, and *The Missionary*. They wanted to call themselves British Handmade Films, but the civil servants wouldn't allow it because Denis isn't British.

HM: What makes the British brand of comedy different from others?

JC: I don't really know, but it has something to do with the tradition of the university wit that is a kind of comedy for its own sake—it is different from comedy designed to play before an audience. University wits do and say things to amuse themselves and their friends. I think the Python comedy, which seemed so subversive to most people was part of that tradition. For us it all began with *Beyond the Fringe*.

HM: Monty Python has not existed for sometime, and yet you are still connected to it and any film you make is automatically perceived as a Python film. Do you feel like a prisoner of the Python image?

JC: That's right. But in England I'm almost always identified with "Fawlty Towers." You see, if you do something that is reasonably successful you do get closely identified with it. What frightens me about it is the prospect that I may never do anything as popular again. What attracted me to *Privates* was not doing something entirely different, because it is a comedy and people will think Python when they read about it. Also what attracted me to it was performing in something I had no hand in writing. Writing the Python films and then acting in them was somewhat dull because you feel there's nothing to discover. When you come to someone else's writing, everything's fresh. There's a sense of discovery.

HM: Seriously, though, the Python image must sometimes seem like a lot of luggage to haul around.

JC: In a way, but you can have it both ways. If you are successful at something people naturally think that that is what you do. In the beginning, I was associated with "The Frost Report," which I appeared on and wrote in 1966 and 1967. Then that image was eclipsed by a show I did briefly with Marty Feldman. The two of us became closely linked in the public's mind (as I recall Marty used some of

the material from that show in a show he did for the States). That show was called "At Last the 1948 Show," and Graham Chapman also worked on it.

HM: Why do you think the Python show was such a popular hit in the U.S.? It was after all very British.

JC: I entirely agree, and I never quite understood the show's success. It is true, however, that of the comics I grew up loving, at least two thirds of them were American. So I expect that Python humor had some things in common with American humor—the greats, like Chaplin, Keaton, Harold Lloyd, W.C. Fields, and the Marx Brothers. When I grew up in the mid-fifties my favorite television shows were Burns and Allen and Sergeant Bilko. At the time, Americans dominated the English comedy scene, really. There was only Spike Milligan, Tony Hancock, and Peter Cook and the others in *Beyond the Fringe*. But they didn't have the same impact on me as somebody like Phil Silvers did. I've always felt that there was much in common in American and British humor. It was just a question of whether the actual names and ideas are comprehensible. I remember doing a stage show in New York in 1974, and one of the sketches I did was about a guy who recounted a cricketing story. You didn't have to know anything about cricket except that it's played with a hard ball. But it was very interesting that the moment I started talking about cricket the audience kind of drifted away, switched off, you know? When the story was over they switched on again. So there is a kind of shut-off point at which the humor does not translate. I think we have the advantage over you because we're so immersed in American culture through television that very little American slang gets past us. Whereas the penalty you pay for being such a large and powerful nation is that you are not so aware of the smaller ones around you.

HM: I suppose that the only American troupe of comic actors as popular as the Pythons was the group from "Saturday Night Live," a group that clearly owes much to the Python tradition. It seems that those people have either burnt-out or vanished—gone on to become Hollywood stars in the worst sense of the word. I don't think any of those things have happened to the Pythons. You've all continued to work successfully in your various capacities: performing, writing, filmmaking.

JC: In America you have something that you naturally take for granted and that is when people become successful in America they become *very* successful. They become very well-known and rich and their fees become astronomical. In England it's more of a gentle slope, and I think that it's much healthier from the point of view of one's family. I adored the people on "Saturday Night Live." They were really good. There were eight or ten of them that seemed unusually talented, but one was aware of the terrible pressures on them. And Los Angeles is a funny place. Success is so important in Los Angeles that a lot of people there lose touch with what made them a success to begin with: themselves. There you get pulled around in all sorts of directions. There are advantages to living in a quiet, sort of backwaterish place.

HM: What were the other comic influences on you as a young man?

JC: I remember discovering Damon Runyon, who was one of the four or five great users of language, as a young man. And I remember being very excited when I discovered a Canadian writer of the turn of the century named Stephen Leacock. He wrote some of the funniest stuff I've ever read. On a Canadian tour I bought about ten of his books. I think that Thurber is a genius, and I don't use that word lightly.

A scene from
PRIVATES ON PARADE

HM: What about some of the sillier influences. I'm someone who will admit to loving those *Carry On* films as a teenager.

JC: I didn't know they were shown over here. The very first one, *Carry On Sergeant*, was the best. After about three or four, I started to list them a bit like the James Bond films. I started to take them for granted. Peter Cook is one of the people who consistently makes me laugh. He came a couple of years before me at Cambridge and he left a legend behind him. You know, for many years all of us—and I mean the Pythons—used to glance over our shoulders to see if there were any funny, young people coming up and for about twelve years nobody arrived. Now, all of a sudden a whole new lot have arrived in quite a short period. There are people who do a series called "Not the 9 O'Clock News." And then there's Mel Smith and Griff Rhys Jones who I think are two of the funniest men in England at the moment.

HM: Michael Palin has said that the Pythons from Cambridge—you, Graham Chapman, and Eric Idle—were all tall and nasty.

JC: But the short ones from Oxford—Terry Jones and Michael Palin—are all hopeless

"What attracted me to *Privates on Parade* was performing in something I had no hand in writing."

and sloppy and disorganized. It's true. The Cambridge people are ruthless, slightly vicious and glossy in a chromium-plated way.

HM: You studied law at Cambridge in 1960. What was it like?

JC: The great days for humor had only just ended. When I went there it wasn't in fact a place where people thought very seriously about going into show business.

HM: What are your political beliefs?

JC: Someone once described me as being in the Whig tradition, by which I mean rather liberal on social issues but conservative on economic ones. I'm in favor of a mixed economy but a free market.

A scene from
PRIVATES ON PARADE

"Success is so important in Los Angeles that a lot of people there lost touch with what made them a success to begin with: themselves."

HM: In the U.S. many of us have a perception of the U.K. that has been formed by "Masterpiece Theatre" and films like *Chariots of Fire*, while the reality there is quite different. There is social turmoil and mass unemployment.

JC: There is no question that unemployment among the young is a sad business. In my day, you got a degree and you got a job, a good one. Now, you have people with degrees who can't get jobs. The only change I see is that the young people I know are not as depressed about it as a few years ago. They're trying to open little businesses of their own.

HM: Are these people you've met through your company?

JC: Yes, through Video Arts. We make training films for people in all aspects of industry.

HM: You've directed two films—*The Secret Policeman's Ball* and *The Secret Policeman's Other Ball*—the proceeds of which benefited Amnesty International. What is your relationship with that group?

JC: I was impressed by their work, and they came to me one day and said they were badly in need of money. They were astonished when I suggested that the easiest thing to do was to put on a stage show, but it was the only thing I knew how to do. We've done four.

HM: Isn't Amnesty International perceived as a kind of radical or perhaps at least left-wing organization?

JC: People think that, but it's just lack of information. It's a shame they've got that image. I think in England they criticized the interrogation of prisoners in Northern Ireland so that made people think they were left wing. In fact, they operate very intelligently. They suggest that political prisoners be dispersed among various nations so that there is a balance, so that people will not be tortured or thrown into jail for the peaceful expression of political views. They're trying to stop the abuse of those already in jail.

HM: Isn't there a well-organized right-wing movement that exists in England today?

JC: Not so much anymore. Organized racism, for example, exists only on a very small scale. The National Front is no longer a viable threat. Their candidates did very poorly in the last election.

HM: On a lighter note, do you realize that to Americans, the three most famous women in England are Princess Di, Margaret Thatcher, and Koo Stark?

JC: (laughs heartily) That's wonderful. But I don't think that your press is as half-witted as ours.

HM: I don't know. Rupert Murdoch is buying up half the papers in the country.

JC: Then you're in trouble. His papers in England have been losing sales.

HM: Who are the three most famous American women to the British?

JC: Barbra Streisand and Brooke Shields.

HM: What about the Python women? When you guys dressed up it was a revelation. It was like an entirely new and awful sex.

JC: (laughs) We just found that the shrieking and the giggling was very funny when it was combined with some recherche intellectual discussions. I don't know what part of our unconscious it came from, probably strange, distorted versions of our mothers.

HM: Do you think the Pythons might have had a hand in inspiring the transvestite movement in England?

JC: The what? I'm a very middle-aged creature, I'm afraid. I don't watch pop programs. Are you talking about Boy George?

HM: Doesn't matter.

JC: I'll tell you the older you get, the less you try to keep abreast of all the trends. At least that's the case for me.

HM: Do you have a new project?

JC: Yes, right now I'm writing a script with a marvelous old guy named Charlie Crichton, who was one of the great English directors. He directed *The Lavendar Hill Mob*, and he's about 180-years-old. He's the best director of comedy I've ever seen. We're in the early stages now, and we haven't even got a title. But I can tell you that it's about a lawyer that gets corrupted. I'm writing it totally on spec, so I don't have to worry about compromising myself or trying to please anybody. All I have to do is please myself.

I'M AGE
I THINK ANYONE WHO IS DIFFERENT MUST BE RIGHT.
SO I BECAME DIFFERENT.
TO MAKE ME RIGHT.
IS THAT AN HALLUCINATION, OR AM I SEEING THINGS?

PRESENTING...TWO CUTE LITTLE EXTRATERRESTRIAL CREATURES TALKING ABOUT...

COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
AH, BUT IT'S TRUE, MY DEAR!
WE'VE BEEN SEARCHING THE UNIVERSE FOR GREAT BACK ISSUES OF HEAVY METAL AND...
AND...
...AND NOW WE FIND THAT WE CAN GET THEM DIRECT FROM HM!
WOW! RARE EARLY ISSUES OF HM! WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE BETTER?
FUTURE ISSUES?

#2/MAY '77: Russian astronauts, "Conquering Armies," the ultimate rock festival, and more.

#3/JUNE '77: Macedo's "Rockblitz," highly praised "Shells," beginning of Davis's "World Apart," Moebius, Corben, Bodé, more.

#4/JULY '77: Lots of Moebius: "Arzach," "The Long Tomorrow"; conclusion of "Sunpot."

#5/AUGUST '77: "Polonius" begins, "The Long Tomorrow" concludes, and "World Apart" and "Den" continue.

#6/SEPTEMBER '77: Roger Zelazny has a short story, and Moebius, a space opera; plus more "World Apart," "Den," and "Polonius."

#7/OCTOBER '77: Fiction by Theodore Sturgeon, Moebius's "Airtight Garage," "Den" and "Polonius" back again.

#8/NOVEMBER '77: New Harlan Ellison fiction, 9 color pages by Moebius and Rimbaud, conclusions for "Polonius" and "World Apart."

#9/DECEMBER '77: Extra pages for the complete "Vuzz," by Druillet, "Fortune's Fool," by Chaykin and Wein, plus full-color Corben, Macedo, Claveloux, and Moebius.

#10/JANUARY '78: Morrow illustrates Zelazny, Lob and Pichard update *Ulysses*, "Conquering Armies" concludes, "Den" continues.

#11/FEBRUARY '78: New adventures of "Barbarella," cover and center spread by Nino, plus Moebius and Corben.

#12/MARCH '78: Gray Morrow's swashbuckling "Orion" debuts; more "Barbarella," "Urm," and "Den."

#13/APRIL '78: Our 1st anniversary issue! A 30-page insert from "Paradise 9." "Barbarella" gives birth, while "Den" wraps it up.

#14/MAY '78: "Urm the Mad" waves bye-bye, but "Orion" and "Barbarella" continue, and Alex Nino tips his hat.

#15/JUNE '78: Corben introduces Shahrazad. Sturgeon's classic "More Than Human" is illustrated, more "Barbarella," and the origins of "Heilman."

#16/JULY '78: A happy ending for "Barbarella," a sad ending for "1996," resumption of Druillet's "Gail," more "Heilman," "Orion," "More Than Human," and Corben's "Arabian Nights."

#19/OCTOBER '78: "Exterminator 17," Ellison's illustrated "Glass Goblin," debut of McKie's "So Beautiful and So Dangerous."

#20/NOVEMBER '78: Twenty pages of the Delany/Chaykin "Empire," more "Sindbad," "Exterminator," Major Grubert, "Heilman" 's final rebirth, more.

#21/DECEMBER '78: The stocking's full with "Orion," Kirchner's "Tarot," and 12 beautiful pages of Moebius.

#22/JANUARY '79: Trina debuts and Druillet concludes "Gail," plus McKie and Corben.

#23/FEBRUARY '79: "Galactic Geographic," "Starcrown," Corben's "Sindbad," McKie's "So Beautiful and So Dangerous."

#24/MARCH '79: Twenty pages of Chaykin illustrating Bester's "The Stars My Destination," "Starcrown" II, and Ellison's late show

#26/MAY '79: It's all-American (except for Druillet's "Dancin' " and a Proust joke)· 15 entries including Corben, Morrow, the illustrated "Alien."

#28/JULY '79: Bodé's "Zooks" premieres, Corben's "Sindbad" concludes. Morrow and Moebius continue, Mike Hinge debuts.

#29/AUGUST '79: Caza steals show with "New Ark City," plus Mayerik, Suydam, "Galactic Geographic," Bodé, more.

#30/SEPTEMBER '79: "Elric," "Buck Rogers," a lizard named "Elvis," and "Little Red V-3," alongside Montellier and Moebius

#31/OCTOBER '79: A Halloween tribute to H. P. Lovecraft, with Moebius, Breccia, Druillet, Suydam, others

#32/NOVEMBER '79: Corben's "Rowlf," Bodé's "Zooks," Brunner's "Elric," Chaykin's "The Stars My Destination," Moebius, and more.

#33/DECEMBER '79: A Christmas package from Caza, Corben, Kofoed, Suydam, Stiles, Trina, Moebius, and Ellison, plus "Gnomes" and "Giants."

#35/FEBRUARY '80: An eerie Couratin cover adorns this issue. Corben's "The Beast of Wolfton" begins, McKie experiments with the Air Pump, and we join Matt Howarth on a crazed acid trip.

#36/MARCH '80: Why did "The Crevasse" take Jeannette? Read the Schuiten strip! Plus: Corben, Matena, Moebius, and Lee Marrs's "Good Vibrations."

#37/APRIL '80: Our 3rd anniversary issue — 32 pages of "Champakou" in living color, final installment of Moebius's "Airtight Garage," plus Caza, Bilal, Howarth, Corben, Bodé — and more!

#38/MAY '80: Does the Supreme Alchemist exist? Will Axle ever find out? Will "Champakou" reach the Doll of Jade? Will Joe strike out with the alien Marilyn, too?

#39/JUNE '80: "Champakou" meets his fate, while "Captain Sternn" saves the day. And it's the Flying Wallendas vs. Earth!

#40/JULY '80: "The Alchemist Supreme" continues; Axle learns truth about sidekick Musky. Bilal's "Progress!" begins, and Moebius returns with "Shore Leave."

#41/AUGUST '80: Druillet returns with "Salammbo" while Moebius concludes "Shore Leave" (and is interviewed). Bilal continues "Progress!"

#42/SEPTEMBER '80: "The Alchemist Supreme" concludes while Bilal's "Progress!" picks up steam. Ernie Colon, Paul Kirchner, Leo Duranona contribute nifty shorts, while "Rock Opera" gets stranger.

#44/NOVEMBER '80: Cover by Hajime Sorayama. Claveloux, Moebius, Kaluta, Springett, and Bilal inside.

#48/MARCH '81: "Tex Arcana," John Findley's epic, begins. "What Is Reality, Papa?" and "The Ambassador of the Shadows" continue; Druillet's interpretation of Flaubert's *Salammbo* ends. Plus, Harlan Ellison's ever timely essay on violence in America.

#49/APRIL '81: Corben's "Bloodstar," Giménez's "Good-bye, Soldier!," Harry North's "Stories from London," and an interview with Julio Ribera.

#50/MAY '81: Premiers of Chaykin's "Cody Starbuck" and Bilal's "The Immortals' Fête!" Plus: Suydam's "The Toll Bridge" and William S. Burroughs on immortality.

#51/JUNE '81: The 1st part of the Richard Corben interview, Jim Steranko's adaptation of *Outland* premieres, Howarth's "Changes" winds up. Plus: Caza, Chaykin, Crepax, and Workman!

#56/NOVEMBER '81: Jeronaton's "Egg of the World," Jeff Jones, Segrelles, and Bilal all frame the art of Leo and Diane Dillon beautifully.

#58/JANUARY '82: Our "Happy Future" issue includes Arno, Loustal, Voss, Hé, and Gillon; and "The Autonomous Man," all surrounded by Chaykin and Simonson, Segrelles, and Steranko.

#59/FEBRUARY '82: The further adventures of John Difool in "The Incal Light." Wein and Chaykin's "Gideon Faust" gets going—again. Plus Fernandez, Jones, Schuiten.

#60/MARCH '82: 2nd Special Rock

Issue featuring Dick Matena's "A Life in the Day," a surrealistic look at the life of John Lennon. Luis Garcia's "Nova 2" begins. Plus "Mercenary," "Den," "Rock Opera," etc

#61/APRIL '82: 5th anniversary issue offers a variety of material. What with Claveloux, Druillet, Moebius, Bilal, and an essay on J.G. Ballard, you'll be busy until our 6th!

#62/MAY '82: The 1st part of David Black's "Third Sexual Revolution." "The Art of De Es Schwertberger." Plus: "Sixteen and Vanilla" by Ted White and Val Lakey

#63/JUNE '82: Fantastic Cities issue, with artists Voss, Caza, Scibelli, and R. Crumb, all surrounded by regulars: Druillet, Moebius, Schuiten, and Fernandez.

#64/JULY '82: Marcele and Lacome's strange "Life at the Circus" and pages from Corben's *Flights into Fantasy*. Plus Jones, Garcia, and Druillet.

#65/AUGUST '82: Jones and Wrightson's "Freak Show" and Pisu and Manara's "The Ape" Plus the finale of "The Incal Light" by Moebius and Jodorowsky.

#66/SEPTEMBER '82: Hecht's "Music-Video Interface," Lupoff's "Barsoom!" and Hinge's "Object." Plus our regulars: Bilal, Fernandez, Kierkegaard.

#67/OCTOBER '82: You'll have Scary Dreams after reading our special horror section Everything from Eddie Poe to the weirdest phobias possible Don't read it alone! P.S.. Last part of Black's "Third Sexual Revolution"

#68/NOVEMBER '82: Part 1 of Kaluta's "Starstruck." Findley's "Tex Arcana" continues as does "Den II" and Druillet's "Yragael" Plus: a peek at Wrightson's *National Lampoon's Class Reunion*

#69/DECEMBER '82: A Will Stone Gallery, the return of Suydam's "Mudwog," and Mark Fisher's "Amino Men." Plus Corben, Fernandez, and Kierkegaard.

#70/JANUARY '83: The strange conclusion to Wrightson's "Freak Show," a look at *The Dark Crystal*,

#71/FEBRUARY '83: The making of the film *The Entity*, Kim Deitch's *Eating Raoul*, and regulars Corben, Kaluta, Crepax, etc

#72/MARCH '83: We bid a fond farewell to Den and Kath, and a warm welcome to Bilal's "City that Didn't Exist." A Gallery on Robert Williams, plus Manara, Kaluta and more.

#73/APRIL '83: Moebius's "The Twinkle in Fildegar's Eye," and Sauri's "The Odyssey," along with Kaluta, Crepax, and Workman.

#75/JUNE '83: Corben's "Doomsculpt," the end of Crepax's "The Man from Harlem," and a peek at the 3-D science fiction thriller, *Spacehunter*.

#76/JULY '83: Liberatore's "Ranxerox," the end of Kaluta's "Starstruck" (for the time being), an interview with Dan O'Bannon and a glimpse at Ray Bradbury's *Dinosaur Tales*.

#77/AUGUST '83: Arno and Jodorowsky's "The Small Earthworm" debuts, Giménez's "A Matter of Time" appears, and Captain Beefheart is interviewed, all behind a beautiful Greg Hildebrandt cover.

#78/SEPTEMBER '83: An exclusive interview with Francis Ford Coppola! Plus a Gallery look at the art of Rowena Morrill and the conclusions of "Zora" and "The City that Didn't Exist"

#79/OCTOBER '83: Timothy Leary! Enki Bilal! Pepe Moreno! Walter Hill! Rocky and Bullwinkle!?! A great issue!

#80/NOVEMBER '83: A spirited talk with Will Eisner, along with a Spirit story Plus Crepax's "Valentina the Pirate." Enjoy.

#81/DECEMBER '83: Ranxerox bows out. Valentina comes on strong. Artist Liberatore is interviewed Lots more!

#82/JANUARY '84: Part one of David Blacks vampire memoirs Plus "Ranxerox in New York", and a peek at Arthur Clarke's *The Sentinel*

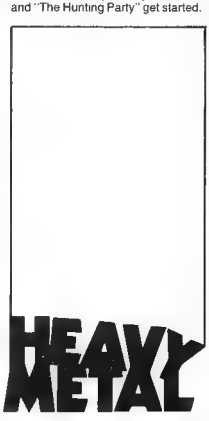
#83/FEBRUARY '84: Douglas Trumbull talks. John DiFool returns And David Black s *My Vampires* comes to an end.

#84/MARCH '84: Douglas Adams is interviewed, Angus McKie and Charles Burns return. Ranxerox ends his New York adventure

#85/APRIL '84: A long talk with Roger Corman. Plus Joe Kubert in "Dossier" and Boris Vallejo on the cover.

#86/MAY '84: "The Railways' begins, "Ranxerox" ends, and The Third Incal" continues Plus, two "June 2050"s for the price of one

#87/JUNE '84: Slava Tsukerman talks about "Liquid Sky." "Lann" and "The Hunting Party" get started.



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CHAIN MAIL

Dear Ms. Simmons-Lynch:

I'd not seen Liberatore's most extraordinary series "Ranxerox" before, and am moved to write you how impressed I am with it. Gaetano Liberatore is putting the fire, excitement, and genius into his work that Corben put in the original *Den* series years ago. That, along with the superb and eternally hilarious "Rock Opera," and "The Bus" features—which I hope you will never drop—gives *HM* three superstars. In my own subjective view they can easily support ordinary good art and text, and justify the mediocre and occasionally bad stuff necessary to fill up page space every month. *(Eh? Nothing we print is used to "fill space"—there is* never *a shortage of material worth publishing. Everything we've ever run was liked by at least one staff-member for a particular reason. The claw marks on all our faces prove that we frequently disagree. —ls)* I've been in the entertainment and publishing business for a number of years, and you have my full sympathy and respect for having done so exceedingly well in providing the public with far-out and imaginative material. They need all they can get. Keep up the good work.

Stan Mott
Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Dear *HM*:

Reading the April 1984 issue has caused my discontent to boil over into this letter. What ever happened to the spontaneity of those earlier issues? Frankly, back then I was left eagerly anticipating next month's offering. In April's issue you presented three interviews. Why so many? One well-done interview is plenty for me. *(We don't quota our interviews, we just talk to people we think are worth reading about. Some months it's one, others four. —ls)* I don't know why you feel that your average reader is heavily into today's music scene. *(Go ahead, make my day . . . —ls)* Your own reader survey reports the average age of your readers as twenty-seven. Not exactly of punk rock age. *(Is that what you think "today's music scene" is—"punk rock"? And also that it's what I write about here? Sheesh. Maybe you should clean the alfalfa sprouts out of your ears before you open your mug. —ls)*

What a dull two-page photograph on the contents page. Cryptica belongs in *Mad* or *National Lampoon*. The artist that draws "Ranxerox" is one of the most talented to ever grace the pages of your magazine, besides Richard Corben. The story contents may be normal for European societies, but it is an affront to our social mores. *(Eh?—ls)* I find some of his panels unconscionable. "Tex Arcana" is fine, although a bit boring at times. "The Third Incal" is a masterpiece—something that pops up quite rarely in your mag these days. My hat is off to Jodorowsky and Moebius. *(Put it back on, you're filling the room with flies. —ls)* "I'm Age" fails to be witty or philosophical. Druillet's art is magnificent—but lately his stories have been unreadable and monotonous. Angus McKie's "Face of the Past" is well-done. Too bad he draws mechanical devices better than people. I wish you would permanently expand Chain Mail. "Valentina" was very boring this time around; "The Bus" brilliant as always. I can understand the longevity of this strip. "Rock Opera" I cannot. It epitomizes what I see as the stagnant condition *HM* has fallen into. Reading it is like having a deja-vu experience. Recent Druillet, "I'm Age," and "Valentina" also fall into this category. I feel sorry for Rod Kierkegaard—his talent is going to waste.

Jerry lin Davis
Baltimore, MD

You shouldn't feel too sorry for Rod, he's doing quite well these days. Recently, he bought a condo in the Trump Tower on the proceeds from the very-successful first year of his Famous Tracers' School. He's finally caught up on all his back alimony, and the various children he's spawned over three marriages finally have decent clothes to wear. —ls

Dear *ls*:

I've generally tried to be tolerant of your denser moments; I figured the man who introduced me to Tuxedomoon and Peter Hammill and Throbbing Gristle should be allowed an occasional lapse. But your comment in the April 1984 Chain Mail on jazz really ticked me off. Knock off the shit, Lou, how hard have you been looking for "young innovators of the form?" *(Uh, would you believe putting ads in the Personals of the* Village Voice*?—ls)* You should go out and pick up the Art Ensemble of Chicago's *Full Force* or *Nice Guys* (or any release by members Lester Bowie or Roscoe Mitchell); the World Saxophone Quartet's *W.S.Q.*; Billy Bang's latest, *Untitled Gift*; or Steve Lacy's magnum opus *The Way*. If you want a good look at new big bands, check out Carla Bley's *Live!* album, or anything by George Russell. Anthony Davis's *Hemispheres* continues his explorations of jazz meets classical minimalism. And if you want someone doing something interesting with voice, pick up the new release by Bobby McFerrin, or either of the Sheila Jordan/bassist LPs. Pick your head up out of the sand, m'man. *(If I did that all the alfalfa sprouts would fall out of my ears!—ls)* By the way, anything new from the Deller Consort graced your collection recently?

Mikel Norwitz
Scottsdale, AZ

Guilty. While I'm at least familiar with all the names you mention (except the Deller Consort—who are they?), I only have records by two or three of them. Little jazz comes my way, and I don't try very hard to seek it out. The Art Ensemble, W.S.Q., and Carla Bley have never done anything for me—they seem lost in the intricacies of semantic gamesmanship speaking in a language I don't understand. Too introverted for me. Bang's been recommended (I've seen him play with others), while Lacy's music has never crossed my path. Davis's Hemispheres *I quite like (only listened to it after the publicist's prodding), and a story on him is planned. Trying to keep up with every new wrinkle in today's polymorphous music scene is impossible—not to mention the other areas I've got to watch as editor of Dossier—but I do my best. I still find jazz today unsatisfying, speaking both as a gut-level listener and a cerebrally-involved appreciator of creative audacity. Like any cultural archeologist, I prefer to dig where I'll more likely find something personally rewarding—but I'm always interested in what other guys are digging up. —ls*

Dear *HM*:

Having been a staunch reader since that first sampling of *HM* in *National Lampoon* way back when, I can't help but get a kick out of Chain Mail. Face it (and I guess you have) somebody will *always* find something to bitch about. Fuck 'em. Cheers for: "Ranxerox" and "El Borbah," Moebius and McKie, "Rock Opera" and "Tex Arcana," and cheers for "The Bus!" And if not, then fuck off—you won't get it as good anywhere else! Maybe Drew Friedman should start a new strip—"*HM*'s Irate Readers Dissections." *(An excellent suggestion. —ls)*

Richard Eisenhart
Elmira, NY

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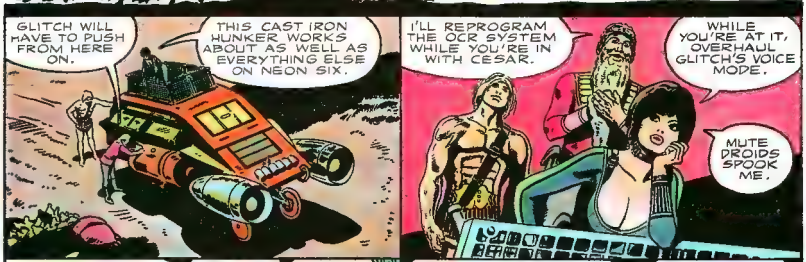
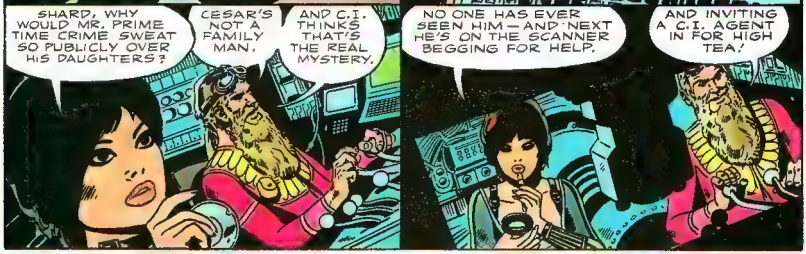
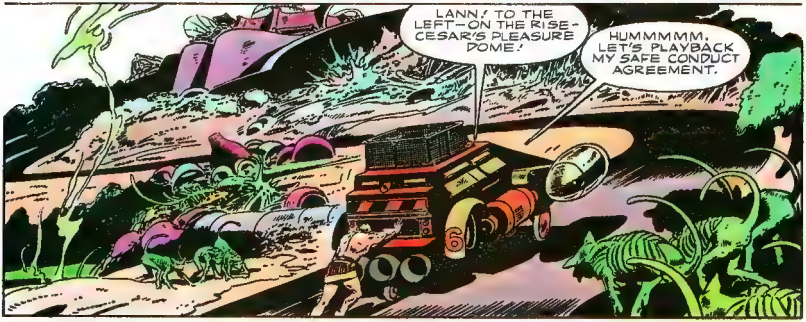
LANN

STILL ON THE TRAIL OF THE MISSING KENTON SISTERS, NEON SIX TECHNOLOGY FAILS AGAIN.


GLITCH WILL HAVE TO PUSH FROM HERE ON.
THIS CAST IRON HUNKER WORKS ABOUT AS WELL AS EVERYTHING ELSE ON NEON SIX.
I'LL REPROGRAM THE OCR SYSTEM WHILE YOU'RE IN WITH CESAR.
WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, OVERHAUL GLITCH'S VOICE MODE.
MUTE DROIDS SPOOK ME.


SHARD, WHY WOULD MR. PRIME TIME CRIME SWEAT SO PUBLICLY OVER HIS DAUGHTERS?
CESAR'S NOT A FAMILY MAN.
AND C.I. THINKS THAT'S THE REAL MYSTERY.
NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN HIM — AND NEXT HE'S ON THE SCANNER BEGGING FOR HELP.
AND INVITING A C.I. AGENT IN FOR HIGH TEA!

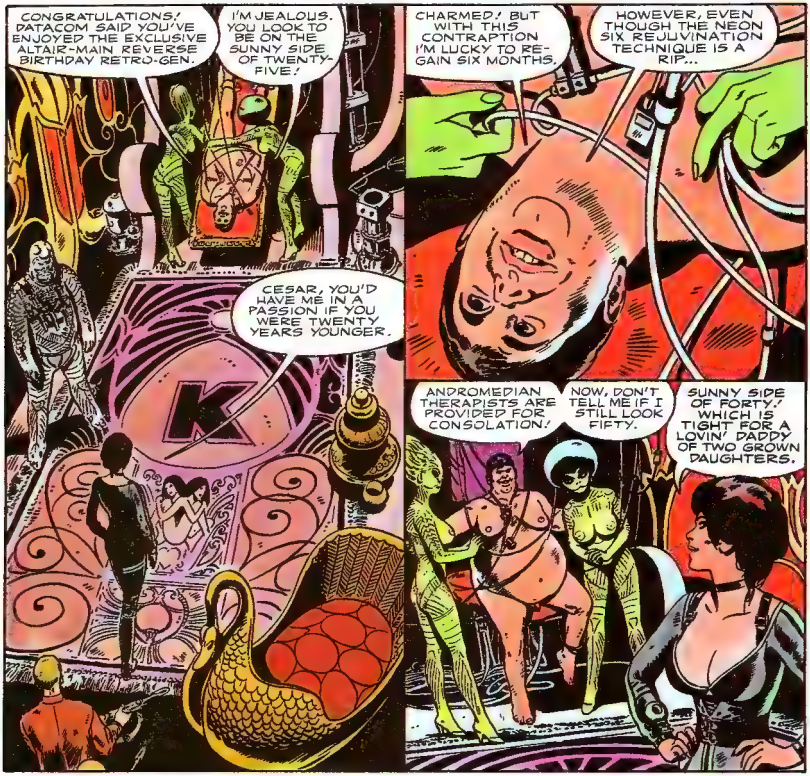
THE KENTON MANSION CROUCHES BEFORE THEM IN THE GREY HILLS MILES FROM PORT NEON.



BY FRANK THORNE

HQ, WOULDN'T SET THIS UP ONLY TO WASTE THEIR MOST GORGEOUS OPERATIVE.
CESAR'S NOTHING, IF NOT A MAN OF HIS WORD.
LATER, BUNKIE. HERE'S MY SPANDA.
NO FANCY BULLSHIT INSIDE, LADY, OK?
OK.
SHE'S CLEAN.

LANN IS MARSHALED TO THE SOLARIUM THROUGH WINDING HALLWAYS OF TACKY SPLENDOR.

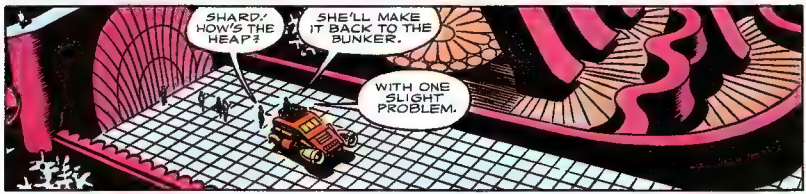

CONGRATULATIONS! DATACOM SAID YOU'VE ENJOYED THE EXCLUSIVE ALTAIR-MAIN REVERSE BIRTHDAY RETRO-GEN.
I'M JEALOUS. YOU LOOK TO BE ON THE SUNNY SIDE OF TWENTY-FIVE!
CHARMED! BUT WITH THIS CONTRAPTION I'M LUCKY TO REGAIN SIX MONTHS.
HOWEVER, EVEN THOUGH THE NEON SIX REJUVINATION TECHNIQUE IS A RIP...
CESAR, YOU'D HAVE ME IN A PASSION IF YOU WERE TWENTY YEARS YOUNGER.
ANDROMEDIAN THERAPISTS ARE PROVIDED FOR CONSOLATION!
NOW, DON'T TELL ME IT STILL LOOK FIFTY.
SUNNY SIDE OF FORTY! WHICH IS TIGHT FOR A LOVIN' DADDY OF TWO GROWN DAUGHTERS.

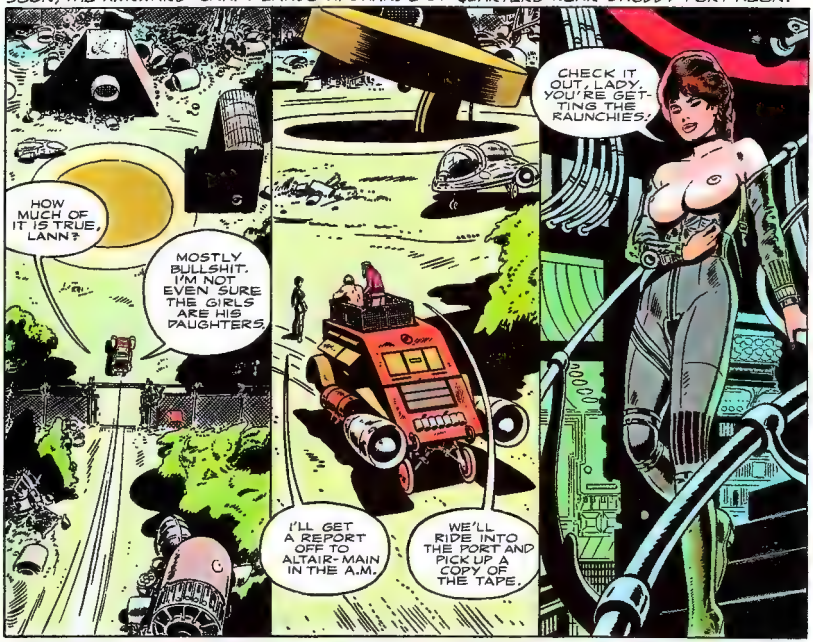
LOVIN' DADDY! HEAR THAT, ROMMEL?
LET'S TALK ABOUT LONI AND LISA.
MY BUNNIES... GONE... STOLEN... ABDUCTED!
WHAT DOES C.I. SCAN KNOW?
THE GEMINID ANGLE... WHICH IS SCANT. HOW DO YOU PLAY AN ABDUCTION SCENERIO?
I'M SWIMMING IN A FUCKING SEA OF SHARKS!
ONE OF THEM HAS SNATCHED THE GIRLS IN A MOVE ONTA MY TURF.
THAT MEANS WAR.
AND HALF OF NEON SIX IS BLOWN AWAY IN THE CROSS-FIRE.
THAT'S WHY WE GOTTA FIND MY BUNNIES.
UH-HUH. DO YOU HAVE ANY LEADS?
ONLY AVEN, THE GEMINID.
YOU'RE LOOKING AT AVEN CORIO AND MY TWIN BABY DOLLS!
HE WAS THE LAST ONE SEEN WITH THE GIRLS.
THIS TAPE IS HUSTLED IN EVERY PORN SHOP FROM HERE TO ALTAIR-MAIN.

LANN MARIN'S NEW BODY THROBS IN RESPONSE TO THE VIVID 3D IMAGERY ON THE SCREEN.

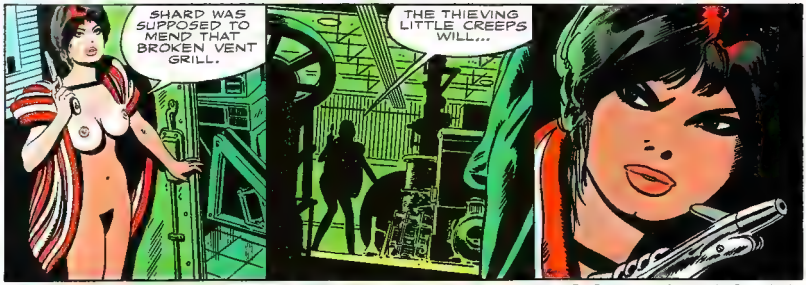
IT WAS SHOT DURING THE FLOOR SHOW AT THE FANTASY LOUNGE IN PORT NEON.
AVEN OWNED THE JOINT, AND STARRED IN THE SHOW.
THIS STUD IS MAGIC WITH LADIES, EVEN BEFORE THEY FIND OUT HE HAS TWO COCKS.
TO BE TWICE HUNG THAT LARGE, SPECTACULAR, EVEN FOR A GEMINID.
C.I. SCAN HAS HIM AS A DRAGGED OUT SPEED FREAK GOIN' DOWN THE DRAIN ON DOPE AND BOOZE.
YEP. AND MY LITTLE FELINES WENT AFTER HIM LIKE HE WAS CATNIP.
HE'S ON THE RUN. BUT, IF THE BASTARD CAN BE TRACKED DOWN...
IF HE'S ALIVE.
IF I FIND HIM FIRST, HE WON'T BE... VERY LONG.
TA TA.
TA TA.

THE ARMED HENCHMEN RETURN LANN TO THE OUTER GATES OF CESAR KENTON'S FORTRESS.




SOON, THE AWKWARD CRAFT LANDS AT SHARD'S C.I. QUARTERS NEAR SHODDY PORT NEON.
HOW MUCH OF IT IS TRUE, LANN?
MOSTLY BULLSHIT. I'M NOT EVEN SURE THE GIRLS ARE HIS DAUGHTERS.
I'LL GET A REPORT OFF TO ALTAIR-MAIN IN THE A.M.
WE'LL RIDE INTO THE PORT AND PICK UP A COPY OF THE TAPE.
CHECK IT OUT, LADY. YOU'RE GETTING THE RAUNCHIES.
LANN SMOOTHLY SLIPS OUT OF HER JUMPSUIT AS THE VIDEO DISPLAYS SPIN THROUGH HER MIND.
DAMMMN! SOUNDS LIKE GIGOS IN THE STORAGE BAY.

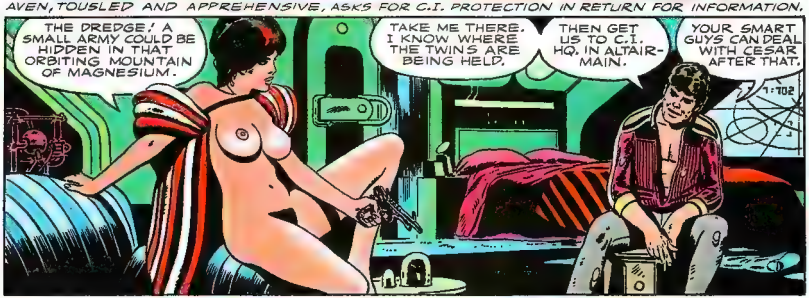
WITH A DEADLY SPANDA CLUTCHED IN HER MOIST HAND, LANN ENTERS THE STORAGE BAY.



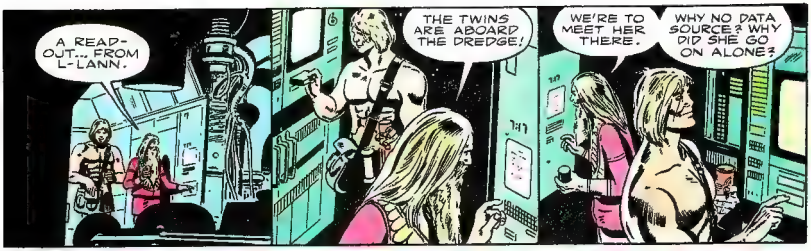
THE HUDDLED FORM ETCHED IN THE GREENISH LIGHT IS NOT OF THE PEST-BEASTS OF NEON-SIX.

FREEZE!
NOW!
SLOW!
UP AGAINST THE BULK-HEAD!
SURPRISE! AN UNARMED MALE IN PORT NEON.
OOOOPS! SURPRISE! A GEMINID...
AVEN CORIO; I PRESUME. I NEVER FORGET A FACE I'VE SEEN ON A PORN LOOP.

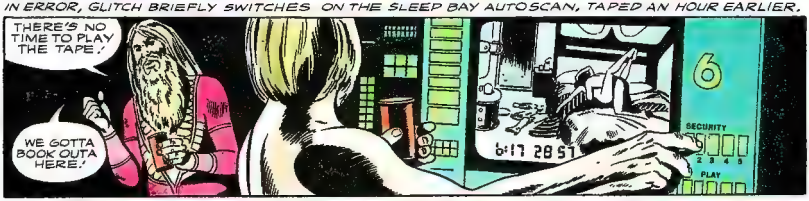
AVEN, TOUSLED AND APPREHENSIVE, ASKS FOR C.I. PROTECTION IN RETURN FOR INFORMATION.


THE DREDGE! A SMALL ARMY COULD BE HIDDEN IN THAT ORBITING MOUNTAIN OF MAGNESIUM.
TAKE ME THERE. I KNOW WHERE THE TWINS ARE BEING HELD.
THEN GET US TO C.I. HQ. IN ALTAIR-MAIN.
YOUR SMART GUYS CAN DEAL WITH CESAR AFTER THAT.

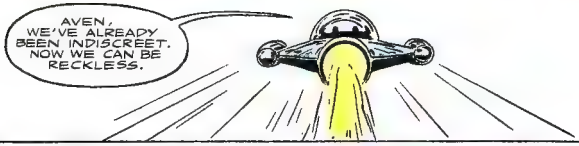
AGREED.
AND, BY THE WAY, I'M IMPRESSED.
TOUCHÉ.
CHECK OFF "CHARMING."
HOW ABOUT "UNPREDICTABLE AND ANTISOCIAL--
--EXCEPT WITH WOMEN."
YOU'VE BEEN READING MY DATACOM DOSSIER.
I ALWAYS DO MY HOMEWORK.
LATER, AS SHARD AND GLITCH RETURN FROM PORT NEON.
G-GLITCH, OL' PLASTIC BUDDY... ITH A PITY YA DIDN'T KNOW ME AN LANNE BEFORE HER RETRO-GEN.
WE WERE TIGHT! A-TEAM OF C.I. MAIN. TIGHTEST GODDAMN PAIR IN TH' CORPS!
CHRISSAKE... NOW I FEEL GUILTY OF CHILD MOLESTATION EVEN TOUCHIN' THOSE FIRM, NEW B-BOOBS!
FUCKIN' G-GUILT.
WELL, OL' BUDDY, I DARESAY SHE'S W-WARM TO KEEPIN' THINGS THE WAY THEY WERE.
CHRISSAKE, I HOPE SHE'S P-PATIENT.



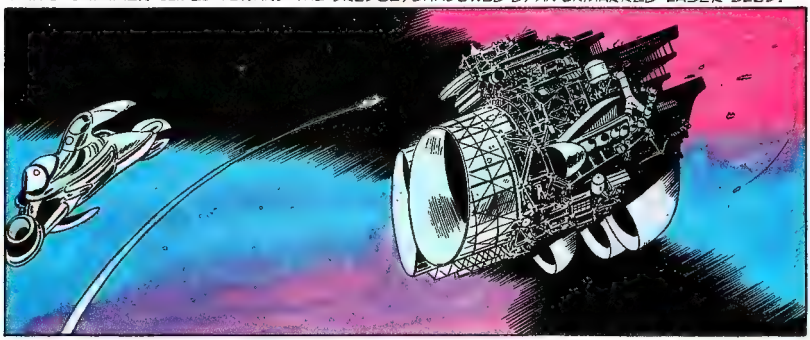
IN ERROR, GLITCH BRIEFLY SWITCHES ON THE SLEEP BAY AUTOSCAN, TAPED AN HOUR EARLIER.



EVEN AS THE TWO IGNORE THE FLEETING IMAGE, LANN AND AVEN STREAK TOWARD NEON DREDGE SIX.



LANN'S SKIMMER GLIDES TOWARD THE DREDGE, SHADOWED BY AN UNMARKED LASER SLED.



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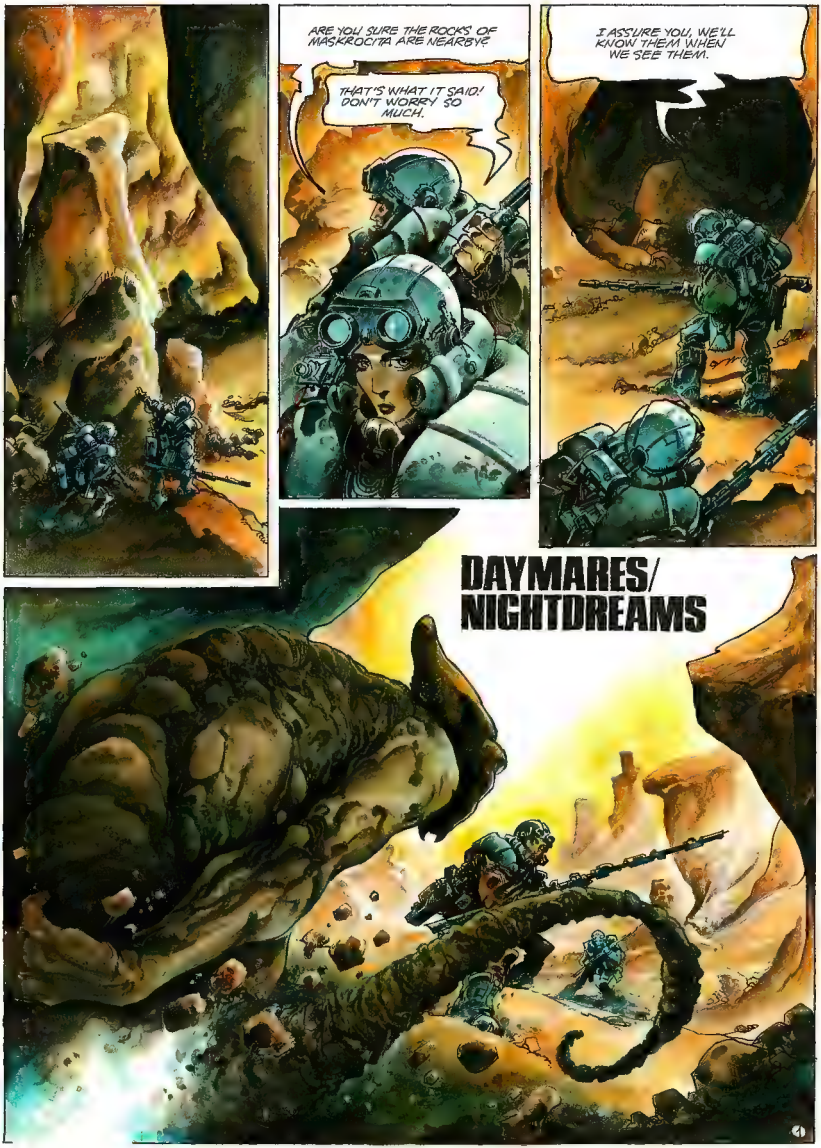

ARE YOU SURE THE ROCKS OF MASKROCITA ARE NEARBY?
THAT'S WHAT IT SAID! DON'T WORRY SO MUCH.
I ASSURE YOU, WE'LL KNOW THEM WHEN WE SEE THEM.
DAYMARES/ NIGHTDREAMS

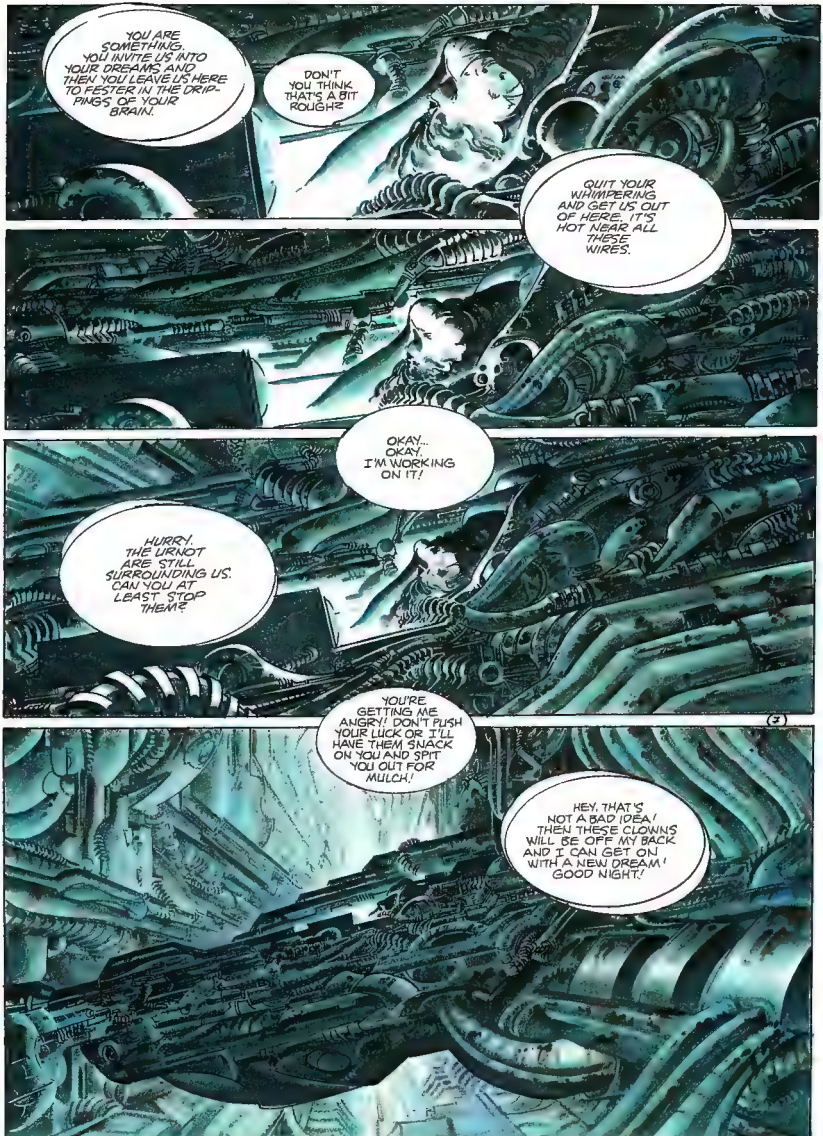
NO! NO! DON'T SHOOT!
¡TOMB!
TUMB! ¡TOMB! ¡TOMB!
KRISS
SSSHH
SSSHHHH
(2)
ARE YOU OKAY?
STUPID! WHY DID YOU DO THAT? THE URNOT ARE COMPLETELY INOFFENSIVE. THEY ONLY ATTACK IF THEY ARE PROVOKED.
LET'S FORGET ABOUT THESE BLOODY STONES. GET IN TOUCH WITH BARNY AND HAVE HIM COME AND GET US.

THE TRANSMITTER HAS BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH HIM!
WE'LL HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE AND TRY TO REACH THE SHIP ON OUR OWN. SOON THEY'LL COME BY THE HUNDREDS.
SOON ISN'T THE WORD.
SHIT! YOU'LL HAVE TO HURRY BEFORE THEY CUT OFF THE PASSAGE.
(3)
shhh
kiss
kiss...

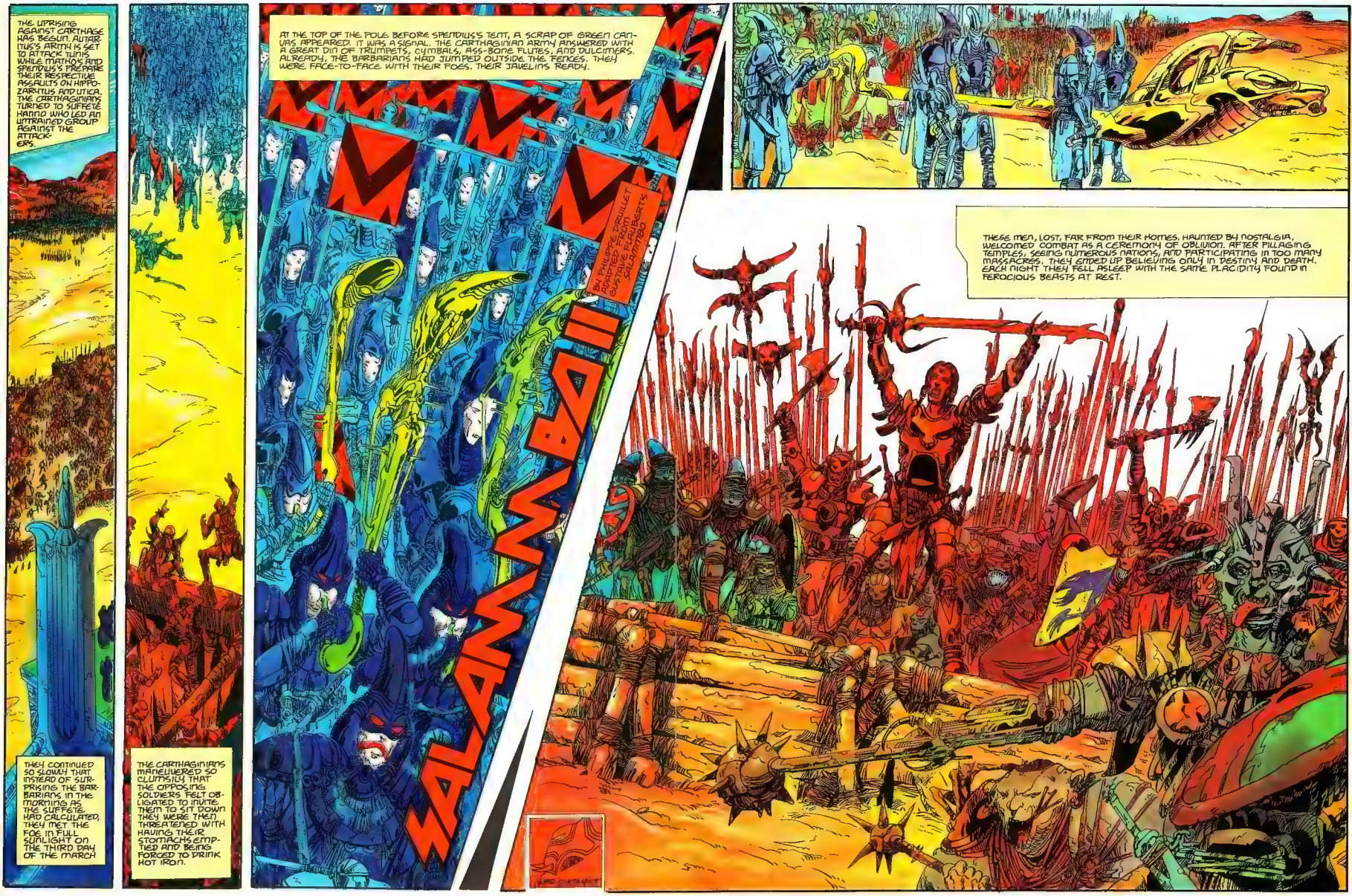
IT'S TOO FAR OFF. WE'LL NEVER REACH IT. WITHOUT THE DAMNED TRANSMITTER WE'RE LOST.
WE SHOULD HAVE FORESEEN THIS. THEY'RE EVERYWHERE!
I'LL SHOOT AT SOME. PERHAPS IT WILL FRIGHTEN OFF THE OTHERS AND THEY'LL LEAVE US ALONE
I DON'T THINK THAT WILL DO ANYTHING.
THE URNOT REACT AS A GROUP WHEN CONFRONTED WITH HOSTILITY. WE HAVE NO MEANS OF ESCAPE.

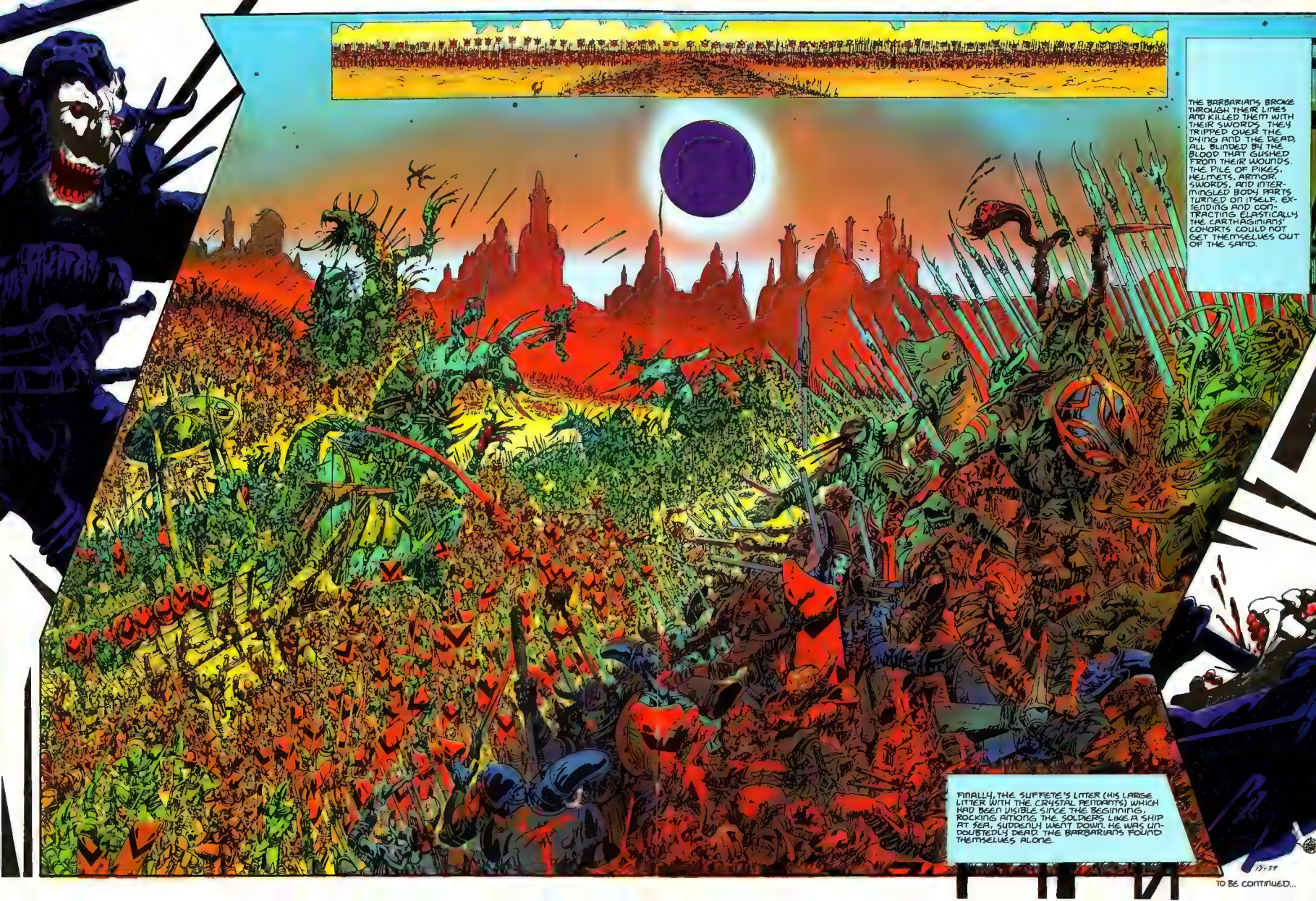
AT LEAST WE CAN TRY TO KEEP THEM AT ARM'S LENGTH FOR THE TIME BEING, WE HAVE NO CHOICE, DO WE?
SHHH
KRS
(5)
WHOA! WHAT WAS THAT?

PHEW... WHAT A DREAM... I HOPE THE URNOT DIDN'T GET THE TWO OF THEM.
I'VE BEEN HAVING THE STRANGEST NIGHTMARES LATELY.
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO CONTROL THEM.
LET'S SEE WHAT I CAN DO.
I WONDER IF I'LL BE ABLE TO HELP THEM
HELP US! THE URNOT ARE AFTER US! DON'T WAKE UP NOW. YOU OWE IT TO US! GET US OUT OF HERE!
IT'S NOT AS EASY AS YOU MIGHT THINK. YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT A LITTLE WHILE.
SHIT!


YOU ARE SOMETHING. YOU INVITE US INTO YOUR DREAMS, AND THEN YOU LEAVE US HERE TO FESTER IN THE DRIPPINGS OF YOUR BRAIN!
DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S A BIT ROUGH?
QUIT YOUR WHIMPERING AND GET US OUT OF HERE. IT'S HOT NEAR ALL THESE WIRES.
OKAY... OKAY, I'M WORKING ON IT!
HURRY. THE URNOT ARE STILL SURROUNDING US. CAN YOU AT LEAST STOP THEME
YOU'RE GETTING ME ANGRY! DON'T PUSH YOUR LUCK OR I'LL HAVE THEM SNACK ON YOU AND SPIT YOU OUT FOR MULCH!
HEY, THAT'S NOT A BAD IDEA! THEN THESE CLOWNS WILL BE OFF MY BACK AND I CAN GET ON WITH A NEW DREAM! GOOD NIGHT!

SHIT! BARAN! HELP! THE URNOT ARE ATTACKING!!! HELP!!!


THE UPRISING AGAINST CARTHAGE HAS BEGUN. AUTARITUS'S ARMY IS SET TO ATTACK TUNIS WHILE MATHO'S AND SPENDIUS'S PREPARE THEIR RESPECTIVE ASSAULTS ON HIPPOZARITUS AND UTICA. THE CARTHAGINIANS TURNED TO SUFFETE HANNO WHO LED AN UNTRAINED GROUP AGAINST THE ATTACKERS.
THEY CONTINUED SO SLOWLY THAT INSTEAD OF SURPRISING THE BARBARIANS IN THE MORNING AS THE SUFFETE HAD CALCULATED, THEY MET THE FOE IN FULL SUNLIGHT ON THE THIRD DAY OF THE MARCH
THE CARTHAGINIANS MANEUVERED SO CLUMSILY THAT THE OPPOSING SOLDIERS FELT OBLIGATED TO INVITE THEM TO SIT DOWN. THEY WERE THEN THREATENED WITH HAVING THEIR STOMACHS EMPTIED AND BEING FORCED TO DRINK HOT IRON.
AT THE TOP OF THE POLE BEFORE SPENDIUS'S TENT, A SCRAP OF GREEN CANVAS APPEARED. IT WAS A SIGNAL. THE CARTHAGINIAN ARMY ANSWERED WITH A GREAT DIN OF TRUMPETS, CYMBALS, ASS-BONE FLUTES, AND DULCIMERS. ALREADY, THE BARBARIANS HAD JUMPED OUTSIDE THE FENCES. THEY WERE FACE-TO-FACE WITH THEIR FOES. THEIR JAVELINS READY.
SALAMMBO
BY PHILIPPE DRUILLET
ADAPTED FROM GUSTAVE FLAUBERT'S SALAMMBO
THESE MEN, LOST, FAR FROM THEIR HOMES, HAUNTED BY NOSTALGIA, WELCOMED COMBAT AS A CEREMONY OF OBLIVION. AFTER PILLAGING TEMPLES, SEIZING NUMEROUS NATIONS, AND PARTICIPATING IN TOO MANY MASSACRES, THEY ENDED UP BELIEVING ONLY IN DESTINY AND DEATH. EACH NIGHT THEY FELL ASLEEP WITH THE SAME PLACIDITY FOUND IN FEROCIOUS BEASTS AT REST.


THE BARBARIANS BROKE THROUGH THEIR LINES AND KILLED THEM WITH THEIR SWORDS. THEY TRIPPED OVER THE DYING AND THE DEAD, ALL BLINDED BY THE BLOOD THAT GUSHED FROM THEIR WOUNDS. THE PILE OF PIKES, HELMETS, ARMOR, SWORDS, AND INTERMINGLED BODY PARTS TURNED ON ITSELF, EXTENDING AND CONTRACTING ELASTICALLY. THE CARTHAGINIANS' COHORTS COULD NOT GET THEMSELVES OUT OF THE SAND.
FINALLY, THE SUFFETE'S LITTER (HIS LARGE LITTER WITH THE CRYSTAL PENDANTS) WHICH HAD BEEN VISIBLE SINCE THE BEGINNING, ROCKING AMONG THE SOLDIERS LIKE A SHIP AT SEA, SUDDENLY WENT DOWN. HE WAS UNDOUBTEDLY DEAD. THE BARBARIANS FOUND THEMSELVES ALONE.
TO BE CONTINUED...

JUNE 2050

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HOW DO YOU PLEAD?

LORD STATHIS, MAN CANNOT LIVE ON ENO ALONE!

WHAT?!! YOU SCUM! SUCKING ON [illegible]!! PLAY [illegible]! PIG!! MALOOT!!!...

DIE!

OH WONDERFUL! WONDERFUL YOUR TRASHINESS! SIMPLY WONDERFUL

AND ANOTHER CULTURAL DISSIDENT BITES THE DUST

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The Hunting Party

christin·bilal

TWO MEN, SPEEDING THROUGH THE WINTRY RUSSIAN COUNTRYSIDE ON A TRAIN, HAVE BEEN REVIEWING THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THEIR SILENT COMPANION, VASSILI ALEXANDROVITCH TCHEVTCHENKO.

THIS GRAND-FATHER THAT VASSILI SPOKE OF SO OFTEN... WHY WAS HE SO IMPORTANT?
MAXIME MAXIMOVITCH TCHEVTCHENKO WAS A FAMOUS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SLAVOPHILE INTELLIGENCIA IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY.
A VERY GENEROUS MAN.
.. AND VERY RELIGIOUS, MARKED BY A FERVENT BELIEF IN MESSIANIC GENIUS PECULIAR TO THE RUSSIA OF THAT DAY.
HE WAS HORRIFIED BY THE MISERY OF THE PEOPLE, BUT HE ENDED UP TAKING REFUGE IN A BEAUTIFUL MANSION, GAINED THROUGH AN ADVANTAGEOUS MARRIAGE.

РЕСТОРАН
МЕНЯДЕ
КОЖ
МЯСО
ФРУКТ
THIS DIDN'T PREVENT HIM FROM SUBSIDIZING THE GROWING SOCIAL DEMOCRACY, OR FROM TELLING WILD AND IMAGINATIVE HISTORICAL TALES TO THE FATHERLESS ALEXANDROVITCH.
THEY WERE CURIOUS STORIES, THOSE TALES OF OUR ANCESTORS WHO, AT THE DEATH OF A KING, LIKED TO IMPALE THE ENTIRE ROYAL COURT.
MAXIMOVITCH WOULD REMIND HIS LISTENER THAT CLOWNS, SOLDIERS, AND NOBLEWOMEN -DRESSED IN THEIR MOST SPLENDID GARB- PERISHED THAT WAY, MERE PAWNS IN A GIGANTIC CHESS GAME. THAT WAS LIFE THEN.

AND THAT WAS THE GAME MAXIMOVITCH TAUGHT HIS GRANDSON IN THE PEACEFUL GARDEN OF HIS DATCHA IN THE CRIMEA...
...JUST AS HE HAD TAUGHT HIM HOW TO HUNT THE HARE AND THE WOLF ON THE VAST MUDDY PLAINS.
HUNTING AND CHESS. DO YOU UNDERSTAND? THEY WERE THE TWO GREAT PASSIONS OF VASSILI ALEXANDROVITCH. THERE WAS A THIRD, OF COURSE... POLITICS.! BUT...
YES?
WELL.. POLITICS IS A TOTALLY DIFFERENT KIND OF PASSION... IT IS THE REAL THING!
POLITICS IS USED TO CONQUER WITHOUT BEING CONQUERED, TO KILL IN ORDER NOT TO BE KILLED.

VASSILI ALEXANDROVITCH TOLD ME OTHER STORIES OF HIS LIFE... INCIDENTS THAT BRUISED AND CUT HIM.
PERHAPS YOU HAVE HEARD OF VERA NIKOLAEVNA FRETIAKOVA?
NO... I DON'T BELIEVE SO.
AFTER ALL, HE IS A MAN... AND LIKE ALL MEN, HE HAS LOVED... AND SUFFERED.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I SUPPOSE NOT. SHE'S NO LONGER A PART OF THE OFFICIAL HISTORY. SHE WAS ELIMINATED IN '37 BECAUSE OF HER TROTSKYITE CONNECTIONS. YOU MUST BE AWARE OF THAT—THE GREAT "CLEAN UP" OF THE 1930s.
FOR THOSE OF US WHO KNEW HER AND HAVE NOT LOST OUR MEMORIES, SHE REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST SUBLIME FIGURES OF THE REVOLUTION. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
AS FOR VASSILI ALEXANDROVITCH... SHE BECAME A VERY PAINFUL MEMORY. HIS LIFE HAS NEVER BEEN QUITE THE SAME.
ФАШИЗМ - ЭТО ГОЛОД,
ТЕРРОР!
ON ONE VERY WARM SUMMER EVENING, WITHOUT KNOWING WHO GAVE THE ORDER, HE DISCOVERED THAT VERA NIKOLAEVNA HAD BEEN ARRESTED.

AND THEN?
SHE DIED.
AND THEN?
BAH!
I GOT TO KNOW GENERAL TCHENTCHENKO MUCH LATER, DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR WHEN I SERVED UNDER HIS COMMAND.
HE DID ME THE HONOR OF TAKING ME ON AS HIS INTERPRETER, SECRETARY, AND CONFIDANT.
THAT WAS THE TIME OF THE KOMINFORM AND STALIN REIGNED AS THE ABSOLUTE MASTER OF THE BROTHER COUNTRIES.
СПАСИБО
РОДНОМУ СТАЛИНУ

WE TRAVELED A LOT, HE AND I... AND WE TALKED. HE TOLD ME SO MANY THINGS DURING THOSE TRIPS.
AGAIN, THERE WERE PURGES... THIS TIME IN HUNGARY, BULGARIA, POLAND, AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA.
THIS WAS VERY IMPORTANT TO VASSILI ALEXANDROVITCH, AS, OF COURSE, IT WAS TO ME. ACTUALLY, IT WAS THE PRIME CONCERN OF A LOT OF PEOPLE AT THE TIME.
AND NOW?
I NO LONGER KNOW WHAT HIS THINKING IS. SINCE THIS FACIAL PARALYSIS, HIS TONGUE IS MUTE AND HIS FACE IS FROZEN.
BUT HE HAS ALL OF HIS FACULTIES, DOESN'T HE?
OF COURSE... AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE STILL HAS A LOT OF POWER. THOUGH HE'S NOW ONLY A MEMBER OF THE PRESIDIUM, HE IS STILL HIGHLY RESPECTED.

AND YOU... WHAT DO YOU THINK?
OH...ME? WELL, I AM ONLY A HUMBLE PARTY MEMBER, AS ARE YOU!.. SO I LISTEN... AND SOMETIMES I DREAM.
LOOK. IT'S ALREADY DAWN.
WE GETTING CLOSER?
I WANTED TO ASK YOU ONE MORE QUESTION...
I'M LISTENING
WHY DID YOU CHOOSE ME FOR THE TRIP?
I...DON'T KNOW. I GUESS BECAUSE YOU ARE A GOOD STUDENT. AND YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH ALL THE LANGUAGES THAT WILL BE SPOKEN WHEN WE ARRIVE.
WHO KNOWS... MAYBE IT WAS JUST ONE OF THOSE LUCKY BUREAUCRATIC ACCIDENTS WITH WHICH OUR REGIME IS ALL TOO FAMILIAR
AH...
NOW... LET'S REST A BIT. WE HAVE A VERY BUSY SCHEDULE AHEAD OF US.
I'VE NEVER TAKEN PART IN A HUNT.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I WAS THINKING OF, COMRADE
AH..

I THINK WE'RE HERE
LET ME HELP YOU THIS ONE TIME, SIR. THE TRAIN IS COMING INTO THE STATION.
WELCOME TO THIS HUNT, ORGANIZED BY AND FOR YOU VASSIL' ALEXANDROVITCH.
16

TO BE CONTINUED..

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JOE DIRITA OF THE APES

THE BELOVED COMIC FINDS DARKEST AFRICA IDEAL FOR RELAXATION.

ALTHOUGH AT TIMES HIS REST DOESN'T COME EASY..

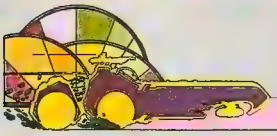
..THOUGH CUDDLING UP WITH A FRIEND IS A COMFORT

ALL IN ALL, IT'S HIS LITTLE SLICE OF HEAVEN, FAR AWAY FROM THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF HOLLYWOOD.

END

THE RAILWAYS

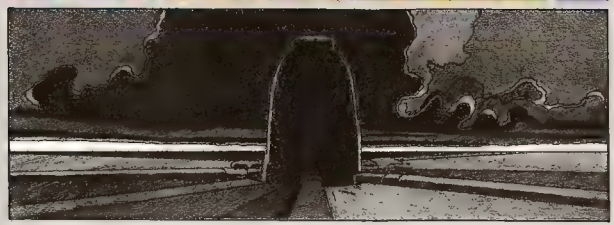
BY FRANÇOIS SCHUITEN AND CLAUDE RENARD

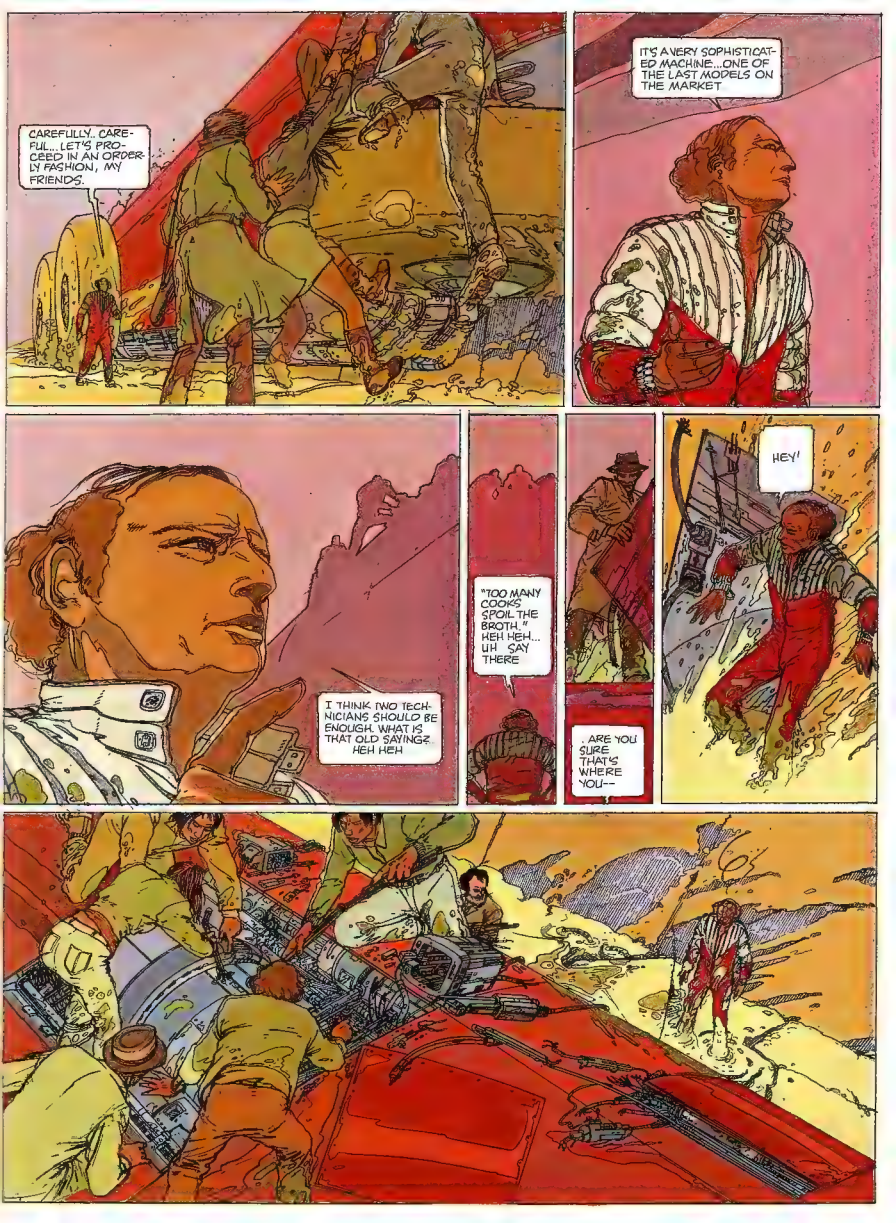


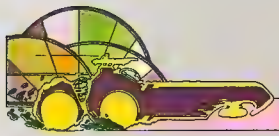
LAST WE READ, WILLIAM DAVIS WAS RESCUED BY WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS A GROUP OF TECHNICIANS, BUT HE SENSED THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT THEM. NONETHELESS, AFTER HOURS OF BEING ALONE AND WORRIED, HE WAS HAPPY TO SEE THEM

THE BREAKDOWN

THE SOLEMN GROUP DIDN'T BOTHER TO FIND OUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ACCIDENT, BUT BEGAN THEIR WORK ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. EACH PERSON BUSTLED ABOUT, AS IF ASSIGNED A VERY PRECISE ROLE. WITH THE INTERVENTION OF THE TECHNICIANS, WILLIAM DAVIS REDISCOVERED HIS HOPE OF GETTING BACK TO THE CITY AND HIS WIFE, KELLY.

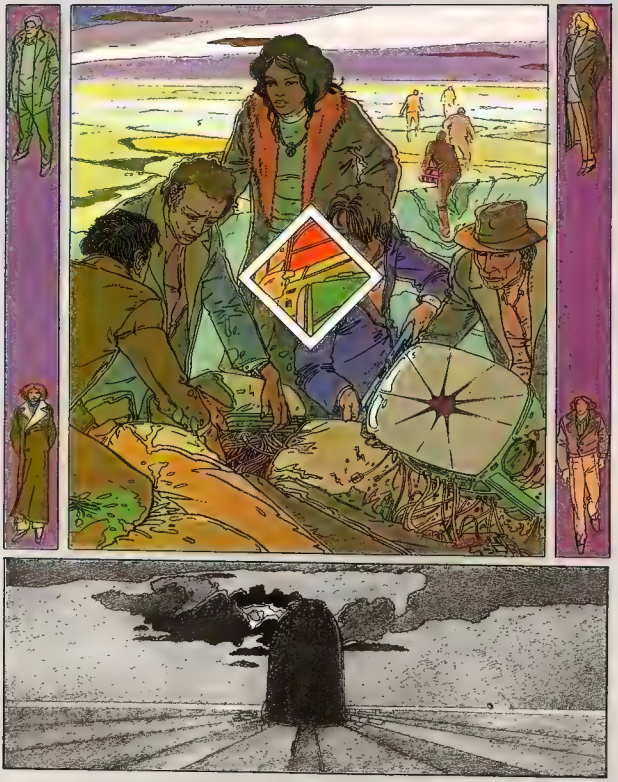


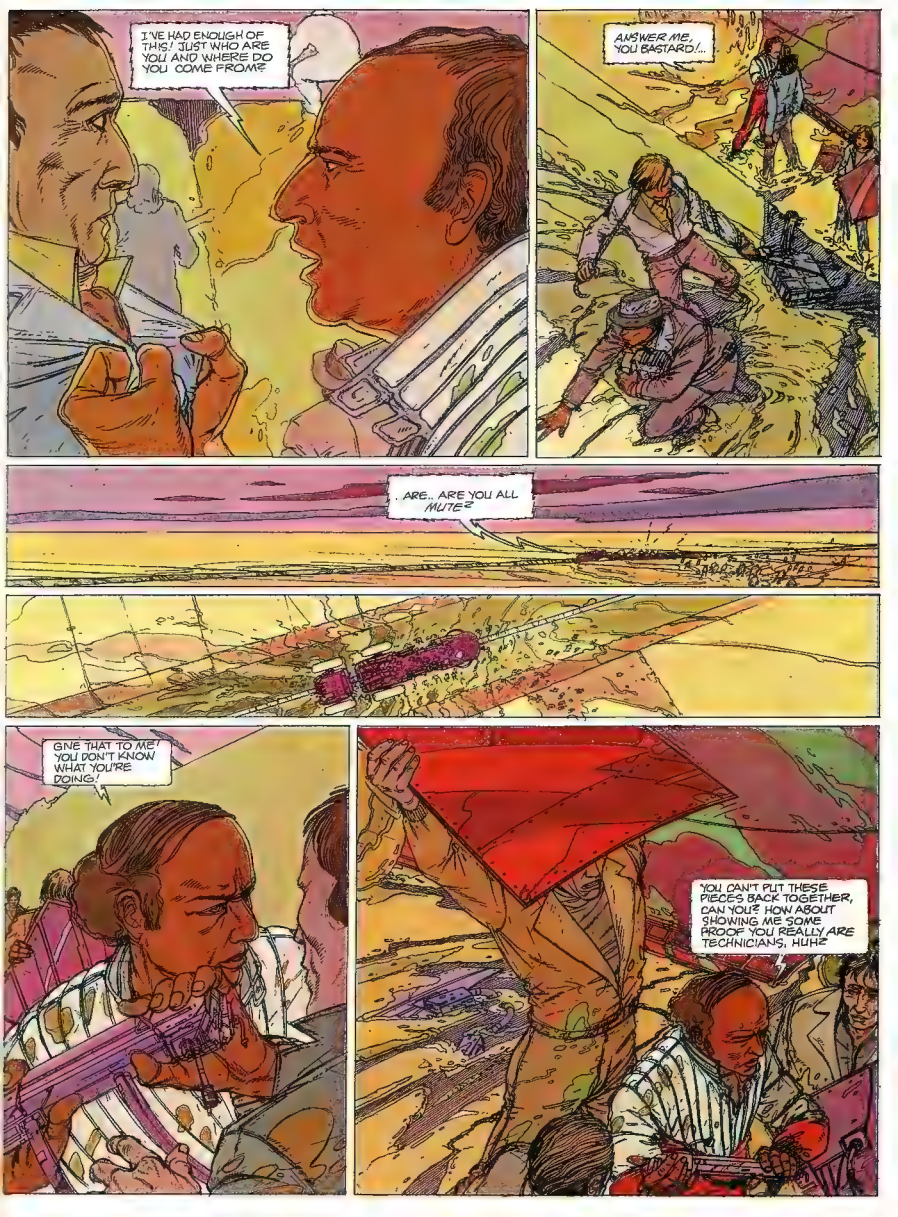

CAREFULLY. CAREFUL... LET'S PROCEED IN AN ORDERLY FASHION, MY FRIENDS.
IT'S A VERY SOPHISTICATED MACHINE...ONE OF THE LAST MODELS ON THE MARKET
I THINK TWO TECHNICIANS SHOULD BE ENOUGH. WHAT IS THAT OLD SAYING. HEH HEH
"TOO MANY COOKS SPOIL THE BROTH." HEH HEH... UH SAY THERE
. ARE YOU SURE THAT'S WHERE YOU--
HEY!



THE BREAKDOWN

SUDDENLY, THINGS STARTED TO HAPPEN. WILLIAM DAVIS WAS OVERWHELMED. WITHOUT ANY PRECAUTIONS, THEY RUTHLESSLY PULLED OUT CIRCUITS AND DISMANTLED THE CAR'S SUPERSTRUCTURE. A GREAT SPIRIT OF ANARCHY PRESIDED AROUND THE VEHICLE. DAVIS COULDN'T BELIEVE THE CARELESSNESS OF THE TECHNICIANS. BESIDES... HE WAS PAYING FOR THIS WORK AND HE WAS DEFINITELY GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEIR SLOPPY BEHAVIOR WHEN HE GOT BACK TO THE CITY. THE MECHANICS HAD ANOTHER THING COMING TO THEM IF THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE DEALING WITH "JUST MANAGEMENT."

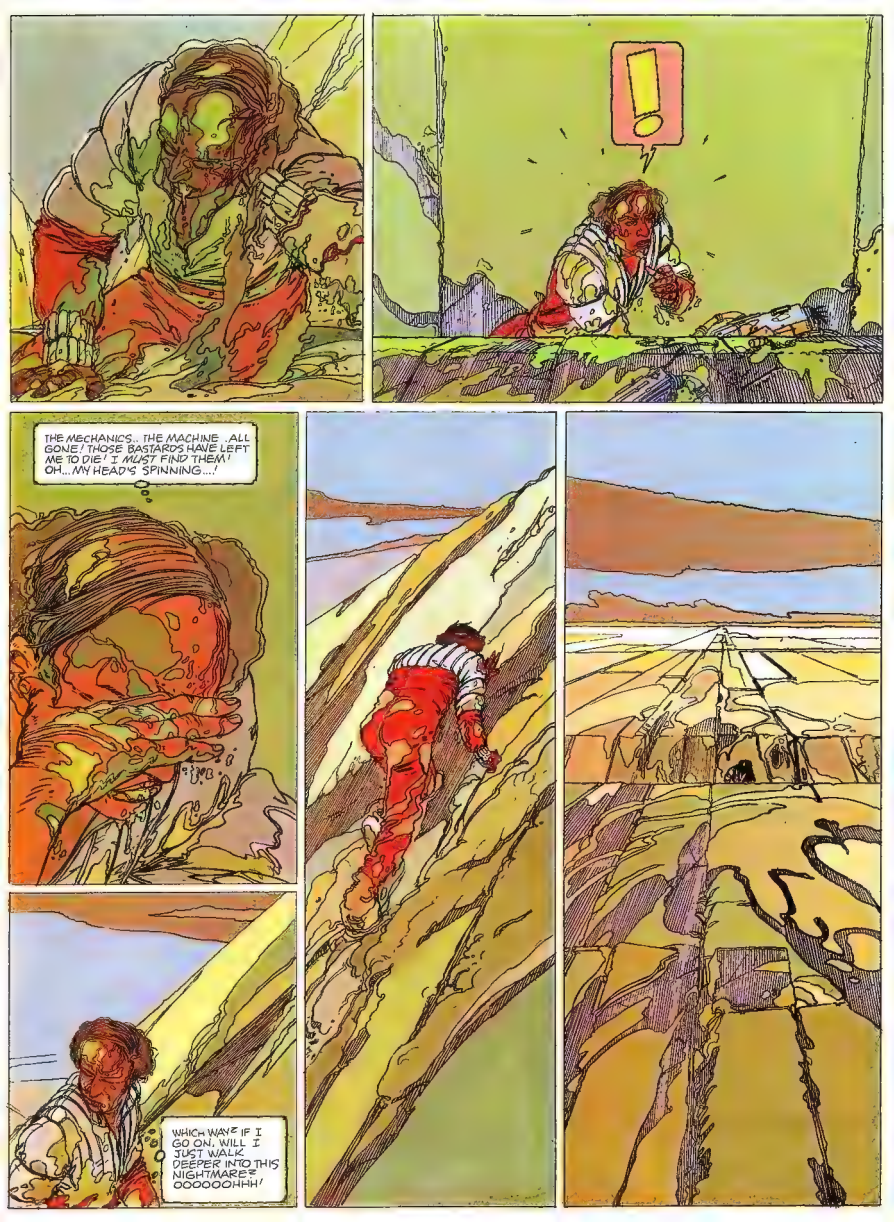


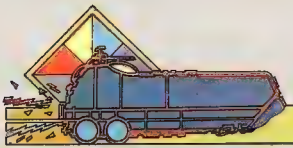

I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS! JUST WHO ARE YOU AND WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?
ANSWER ME, YOU BASTARD!..
..ARE.. ARE YOU ALL MUTE?
GIVE THAT TO ME! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING!
YOU CAN'T PUT THESE PIECES BACK TOGETHER, CAN YOU? HOW ABOUT SHOWING ME SOME PROOF YOU REALLY ARE TECHNICIANS, HUH?

THE EXCHANGER

DAVIS'S AWAKENING WAS A MOST PAINFUL ONE. A LOUD BUZZING HAD INVADED HIS HEAD. HIS FACE WAS HALFWAY SUNK INTO THE MUD AND A THIN LINE OF BLOOD HAD ALREADY COAGULATED AT THE BASE OF HIS HEAD. HE WAS HAVING A BIT OF TROUBLE DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN REALITY AND MAKE-BELIEVE. WHAT HAD HAPPENED? WHAT HAD BROUGHT HIM FAR AWAY FROM HIS PERFECTLY AIR-CONDITIONED COCOON TO THIS MUD SWAMP? WHERE WAS HE...AND WHO HAD DONE THIS TO HIM?

FRANK MOOSE WAS WEDGED INTO HIS SEAT, HIS ARMS OUTSTRETCHED ON THE TWO COMMAND CONTROLS OF THE HUGE MACHINE. HIS HEAD WAS SLIGHTLY SUNK INTO HIS SHOULDERS, HIS EYEBROWS ARCHED AND HIS EYES WERE RIVETED ON THE RECTILINEAR PATH. HE HAD UNCLENCHED HIS TEETH ONLY ONCE. AND THAT WAS TO SUPPLY SOME TECHNICAL DATA TO HIS CO-PILOT, ALICIA TANZ

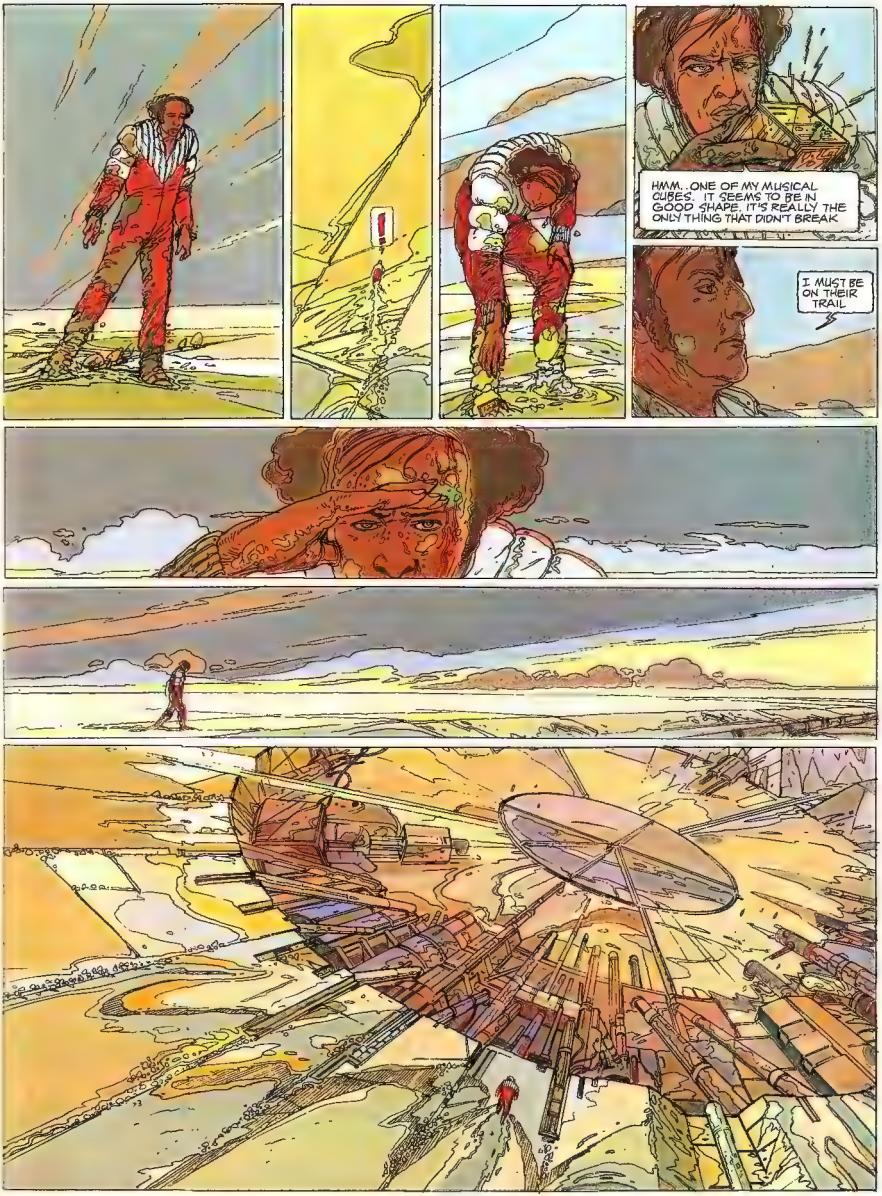

!
THE MECHANICS.. THE MACHINE ..ALL GONE! THOSE BASTARDS HAVE LEFT ME TO DIE! I MUST FIND THEM! OH... MY HEAD'S SPINNING...!
WHICH WAY? IF I GO ON, WILL I JUST WALK DEEPER INTO THIS NIGHTMARE? OOOOOOHHH!



THE EXCHANGER

AN INDESCRIBABLE RAGE MADE HIS TEMPLES BEAT. THE MACHINE HAD DISAPPEARED. NOTHING WAS LEFT. DAVIS WANTED TO SCREAM, BUT HIS ANGER STRANGLED HIM. THOSE WEIRDOS HAD TAKEN EVERYTHING FROM HIM. THE ONLY LINK TO HIS PAST HAD BEEN RIPPED AWAY. HE FELT AS IF HE HAD BEEN RAPED. HOW HAD THOSE CRIMINALS MADE HIM STOP IN THIS ZONE? HOW CALCULATING THEY WERE! HE REPRESSED AN URGE TO VOMIT. HE WANTED TO KILL THEM—AND THAT VIOLENT FEELING SCARED HIM MORE THAN ANYTHING.

FRANK MOOSE DIDN'T STOP FROWNING. THIS WASN'T GOING TO BE AS EASY AS HE HAD THOUGHT. AS SOON AS HE SPOTTED THE MACHINE ON THE RAIL, THE MISSION WOULD BE OVER.



TO BE CONTINUED...

COSMIK PUNK
A PROGRAM OF ABUSE
©1981 Kenneth Smith
Haven't wasted anybody for nearly an hour. C'mon, c'mon. A mugger's gotta mug.
Hold it down. I'm planning something.
Does it involve senselessness?
A little.

I've been starting to see some sense in our life lately. It bothers me.
You haven't got any sense. What could you detect it with, your anal pore?
Pointless put-downs— that's what I like.
You can't have what you like. You are just meaningless meat.
More, more!
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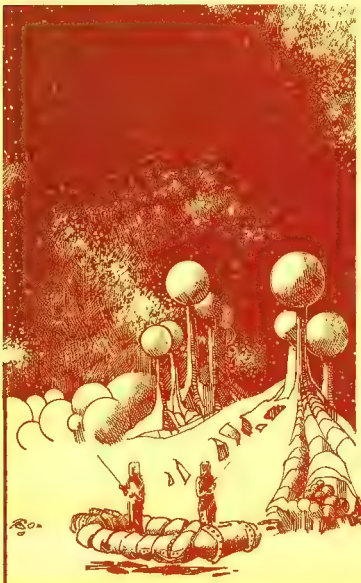
CAPT'N VIRGIL

SPORTSMAN IN SPACE

by June & David Brooks
Illustration by David Brooks



Fishing on Earth suits me and Joe just fine, but it's getting harder and harder to find a hole that isn't under solar radar by some snoopy game warden. So every now and again, Joe and I need to get out of the galaxy to find some peace and quiet. We've found that Planet Arizant is the place for us--even though space suits make it damned hard to take a leak.

Arizant has absolutely no hookers whatsoever--so we must content ourselves with casting our rods (heh, heh, heh) into Lake 16. Joe and I chose this little paradise after getting fed up with the empty beer syringes littered over Lake 15 and the pesky sportsonauts from other planets who don't

speak English and try to sell you human fingers as bait. But we're particularly tickled about the fact that the water isn't man-made.

Joe's favorite fishing rod is his Dyna-lure, which he nabbed from a creepy critter at Hal's (the only bar within two light years) in exchange for a pair of Levi's--Dyna-lures were banned by the Sports Technology Commission when it was discovered that their beams were turning Earth's lakes blue after they'd been carefully dyed red (the Ten Commandments Act of 2010).

Once activated, the artificial bait buzzed away and landed on a newly-opened synthetic lilly. Joe just had his Dyna-lure's speaker tuned before we left Earth, so we could hear the fish approaching clear as a bell.

Holy shit! The speaker let out a shriek that froze every sign of life for ten miles. Joe's rod bent in half and out of a geyser that streamed upwards from the lake we spotted the mother that fell for Joe's automated hummingbird. It then dove back down into the depths of the jelly-covered lake.

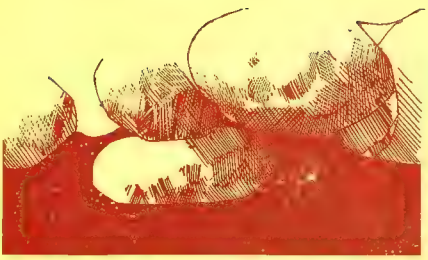
I rushed to the Dyna-lure's video screen and flicked it on, hoping to catch a glimpse of the fish. To my amazement, I recognized the glistening body of a Two-Headed Stickle-back. The Stickle-backs are rare, since they are found only on planets that haven't been exposed to artificial weather. Wait 'til Joe's gal Edna gets her hands on this--that girl makes the best fish ice cream I've yet to taste.

Whoa! That Stickle-back put up one hell of a fight! "This baby is over four kilos!" Joe's veins were bulging through his space

suit. Ten minutes later, his body was soaked with sweat and I was terrified that the sweat would put his pressure stabilizer on the fritz. His line was about to break, so he switched his Line Meter to Weight Two and zapped an electric pulse through the water that put every fish and piece of seaweed into Third Degree Shock Therapy. The fish exploded from the water, foaming from her two mouths. Joe released another jolt, and the battle raged on for another half hour, with our scaled opponent slapping her tail against the water and wriggling with sublime grace. The yelps and moans she let out made us both shudder.

She was fatigued and whining, and easy to pull in. As she plopped on the deck, the string of lights on her back dimmed like a fading marquee.

I immediately noticed her eyes--mainly her pupils. And upon slicing her open with my laser-scalpel, it was very apparent to me that this gosh-darned fish was stoned. And



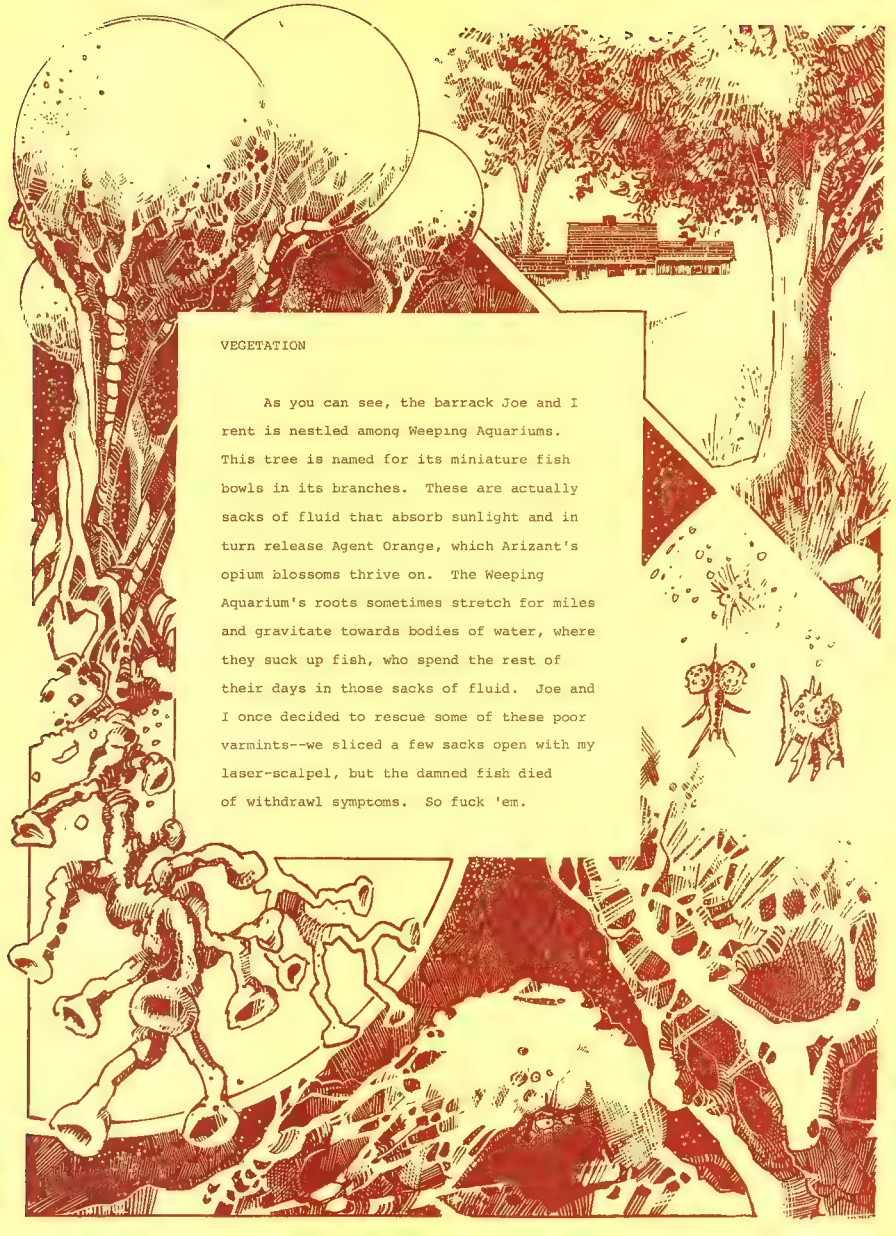
no kidding, there must of been ten opium deposits in her belly. Well, I wouldn't feed this to my family--but all was not lost! I of course brought along my Mount-a-Matic, and had that sucker smack on a slab of mahogany, covered in instant polyurethane within minutes, suitable for framing.

The sky was darkening with floating space debris clouds (clumps of tossed TV's, computers, and calculators that magnetized together), so we decided to move on. I cast my rod one last time for the hell of it, but, with no luck, we blew this crater.

ARIZANT: A CLOSER LOOK

Arizant is a really fine place. It benefits from exposure to three suns, and I never fail to come home with a great tan. It was chosen by the American Industrialist Government as an ideal location for Olympic training, but during Universal War II, it was evacuated, leaving behind luxurious barracks for us sportsmen in space.

Transportation to Arizant is another story. Commercial airliners detour its entire solar system because meteor showers were stripping their paint, throwing their stewardess-oids out of whack, and making in-flight movies utterly impossible. Joe and I used to fly to Spielberg D.L. (District of Lucas) and bribe a rum-runner with more Levi's to fly us into Arizant. But now that my kids are on their own, Opal and I sunk out dough into an Aldo Supernova II, a little beauty that gets us to Arizant in less than two days.



VEGETATION

As you can see, the barrack Joe and I rent is nestled among Weeping Aquariums. This tree is named for its miniature fish bowls in its branches. These are actually sacks of fluid that absorb sunlight and in turn release Agent Orange, which Arizant's opium blossoms thrive on. The Weeping Aquarium's roots sometimes stretch for miles and gravitate towards bodies of water, where they suck up fish, who spend the rest of their days in those sacks of fluid. Joe and I once decided to rescue some of these poor varmints--we sliced a few sacks open with my laser-scalpel, but the damned fish died of withdrawl symptoms. So fuck 'em.

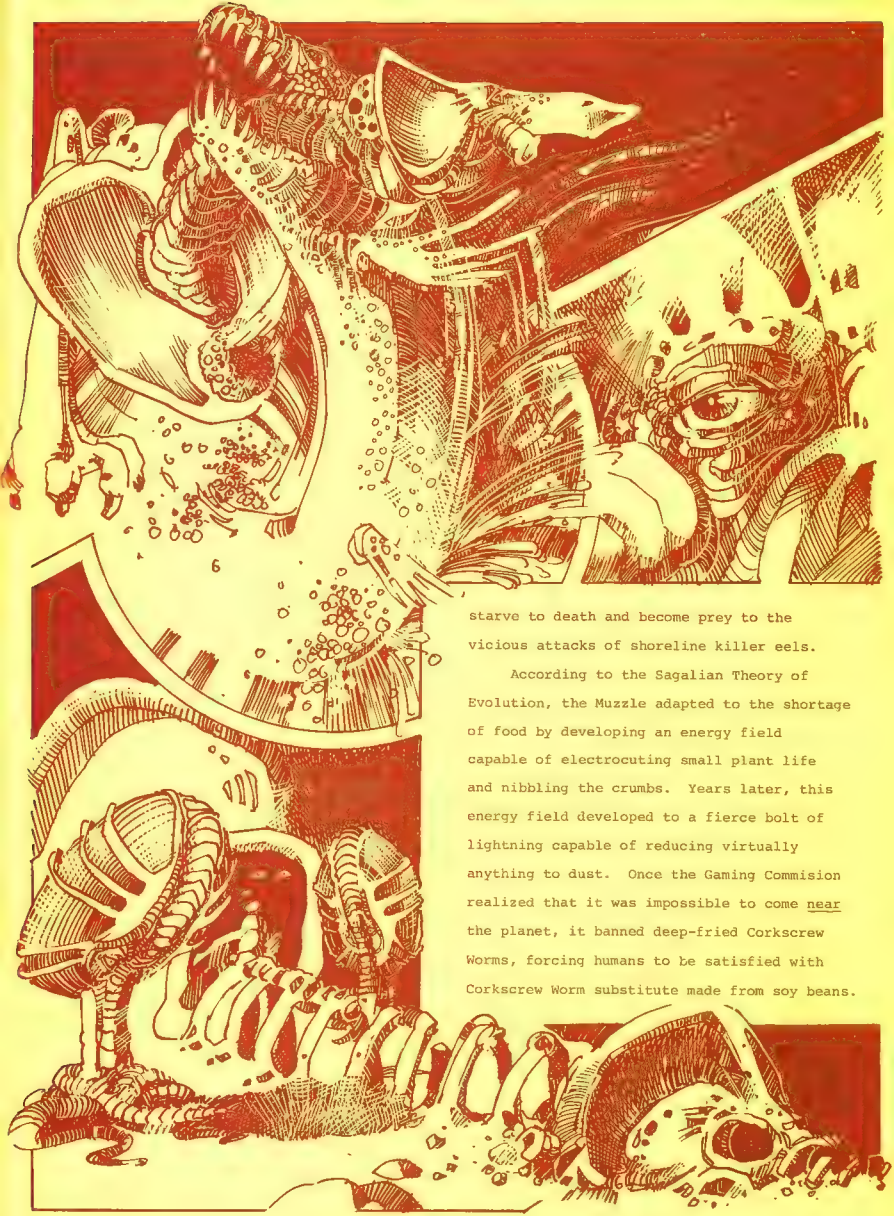
THE LONG-NECKED MUZZLE

When the Interplanetary Space Exploration Unit made its first landing on Arizant, the Long-necked Muzzles discovered it before it discovered them. Space Station 1X2A touched the surface of what they thought was the planet--it wasn't more than a minute before they realized they were on the back of a dinosaur-sized animal. The creature was named for its mouth, which is shut at birth, making it impossible for it to eat anything but the miniscule Corkscrew Worms that infest the earth.

Long-necked Muzzles are virtually extinct now. They were at first slaughtered

for their skins, which were so tough and resilient that they made perfect trampolines. Soon demand overcame the supply, and the Universal Gaming Board ruled that Muzzles were not for jumping up and down on.

But other developments jeopardized the animal. Humans discovered that Corkscrew Worms were delicious deep-fried, and when shiploads of them were imported to Earth, they wiped out the onion ring and French fry market. Long necked-muzzles started to



starve to death and become prey to the vicious attacks of shoreline killer eels.

According to the Sagalian Theory of Evolution, the Muzzle adapted to the shortage of food by developing an energy field capable of electrocuting small plant life and nibbling the crumbs. Years later, this energy field developed to a fierce bolt of lightning capable of reducing virtually anything to dust. Once the Gaming Commision realized that it was impossible to come near the planet, it banned deep-fried Corkscrew Worms, forcing humans to be satisfied with Corkscrew Worm substitute made from soy beans.

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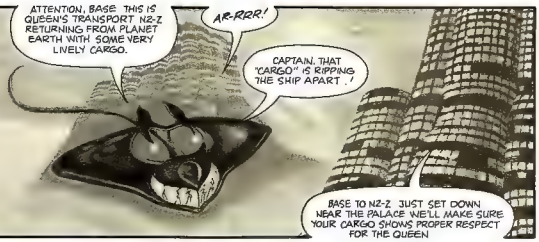
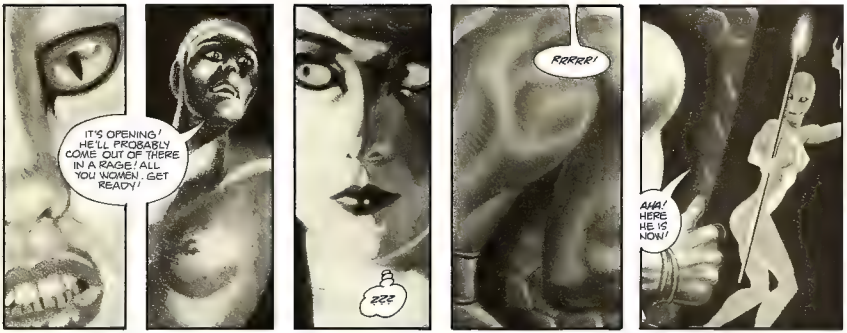
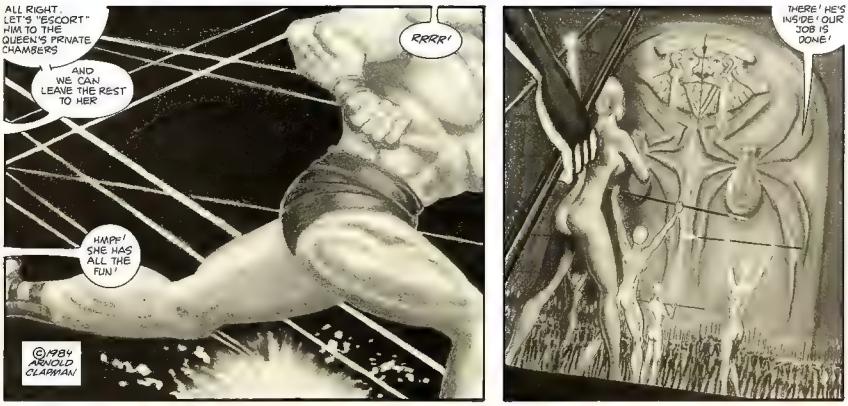
THE WILD ONE

THE SMALL PLANET VIVEANNA, OVER 2,500 EARTH YEARS AGO


ATTENTION, BASE. THIS IS QUEEN'S TRANSPORT NZ-Z RETURNING FROM PLANET EARTH WITH SOME VERY LIVELY CARGO.
AR-RRR!
CAPTAIN, THAT "CARGO" IS RIPPING THE SHIP APART.!
BASE TO NZ-Z. JUST SET DOWN NEAR THE PALACE. WE'LL MAKE SURE YOUR CARGO SHOWS PROPER RESPECT FOR THE QUEEN

AND, AT THE PALACE
SURROUND THE SHIP!
REMEMBER THE QUEEN WANTS HIM UNHARMED!
SET YOUR WEAPONS ON "STUN"
.. AND OPEN THE CARGO HATCH

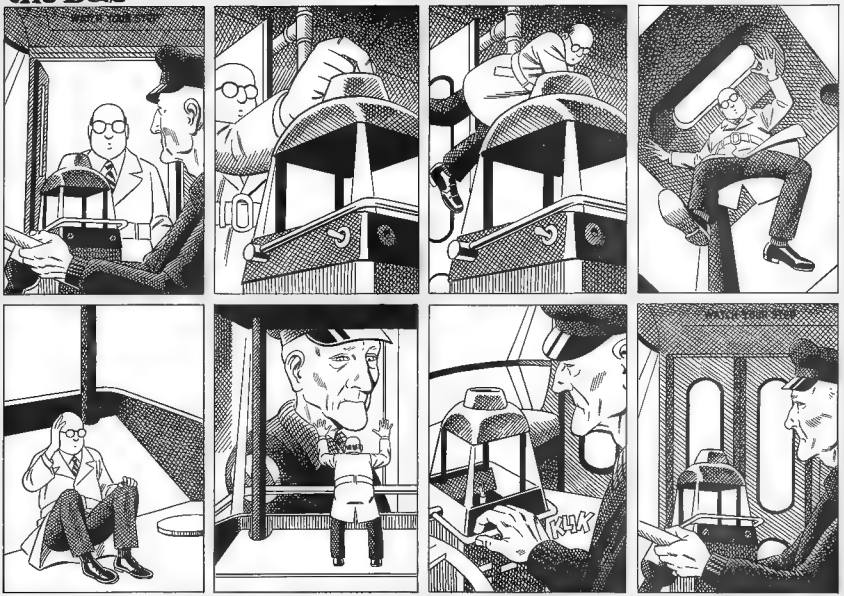



ALL RIGHT. LET'S "ESCORT" HIM TO THE QUEEN'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS
AND WE CAN LEAVE THE REST TO HER
HMPH! SHE HAS ALL THE FUN!
RRRR!
©1984 ARNOLD CLARMAN
THERE! HE'S INSIDE! OUR JOB IS DONE!

YOU KNOW... DESPITE THE FACT THAT HE WAS SO... GROTESQUE... THERE WAS SOMETHING SO WILDLY POWERFUL ABOUT HIM! WHILE HE WAS STANDING THERE GROWLING AT US, I FELT A REAL SENSE OF ...OF DESIRE! HEH HEH... SILLY, ISN'T IT? AFTER ALL, HE'S ONLY THE SECOND MALE I'VE SEEN IN MY ENTIRE LIFE.
OH, YOU'RE SUCH A CHILD! I'VE SEEN THREE! HAHAHAA! THE STORY I'VE HEARD GOES LIKE THIS. THE QUEEN'S PERSONAL SPACE PROBE WAS CIRCLING THE PRIMITIVE PLANET EARTH. THE PROBE FOUND EVIDENCE OF A POSSIBLE LOVER FOR THE QUEEN. AND A SQUAD TRAVELED ALL THE WAY TO EARTH TO CAPTURE THIS PERFECT SPECIMEN.
HIS NAME IS HERCULES... OR HERACLES. OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. ANYWAY, IF HE'S THE QUEEN'S NEW LOVER, YOU CAN BET HE'S A REAL ANIMAL!
HEE HEE!
OF COURSE THE CAT-WOMEN OF VIVEANNA HAD NO IDEA THAT THE QUEEN'S NEW LOVER WAS NOT THE LEGENDARY HERCULES. BUT, INSTEAD, THE DREADED MINOTAUR. THE QUEEN COULD NOT HAVE CARED LESS. SHE QUICKLY TAMED THE MAN-BULL, ALLOWING HIS WILDER INSTINCTS TO SURFACE ONLY DURING MOMENTS OF PASSION. AT THOSE TIMES, HE TRULY WAS AN ANIMAL
GRRRR!
THE END

the bus

PAUL KIRCHNER ©



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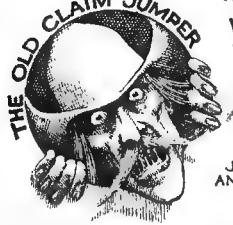
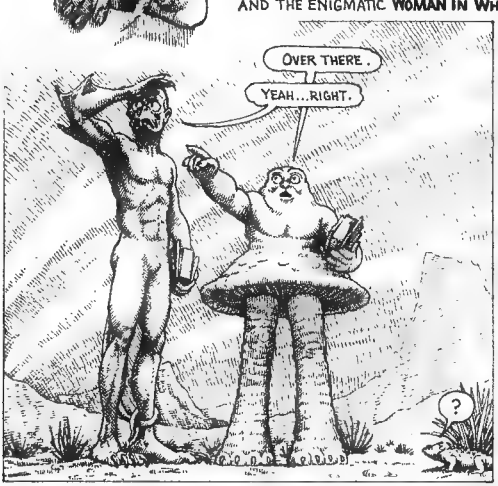
TEX★ARCANA

MEETS THE TOAST OF EUROPE

PART 10



WELL, IT'S BEEN AN EVENT-FILLED DAY IN OUR LITTLE CORNER OF THE OLD WEST. DOWN AT THE WIDOW BURNS'S BOARDING HOUSE, **PALOMA SUE** HAS TAKEN A NOTION (TO THE CHAGRIN OF SOME, THE DELIGHT OF OTHERS) NOT TO WEAR ANY CLOTHES. THE WIDOW, HERSELF, IS PREOCCUPIED WITH **SIGNORE PAGANO** (THE TOAST OF EUROPE) AND THE HAUNTING (BUT DELINQUENT) STRAINS OF MUSIC ISSUING FROM HIS ROOM. THE **SHERIFF** AND HIS SEARCH PARTY ARE WANDERING WESTWARD IN THE HOPE OF FINDING **HERP** AND **SWEAZ**, WHO HAVE NARROWLY ESCAPED BEING BUSHWHACKED BY AN "UNKNOWN ASSAILANT" AND DRYGULCHED BY AN OVERZEALOUS RURAL MAIL CARRIER. LET US JOIN THEM, NOW, AS THEY CONTINUE IN THEIR QUEST FOR **TEX ARCANA** AND THE ENIGMATIC **WOMAN IN WHITE**....



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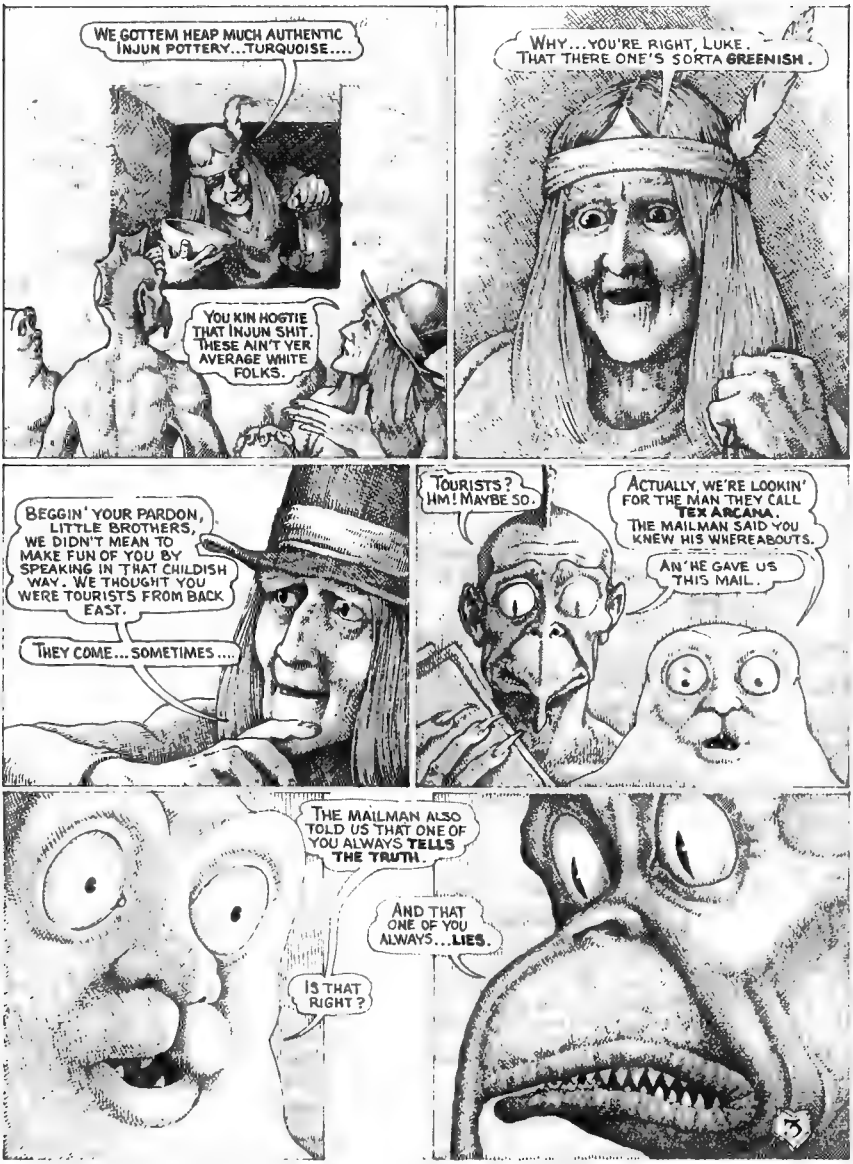
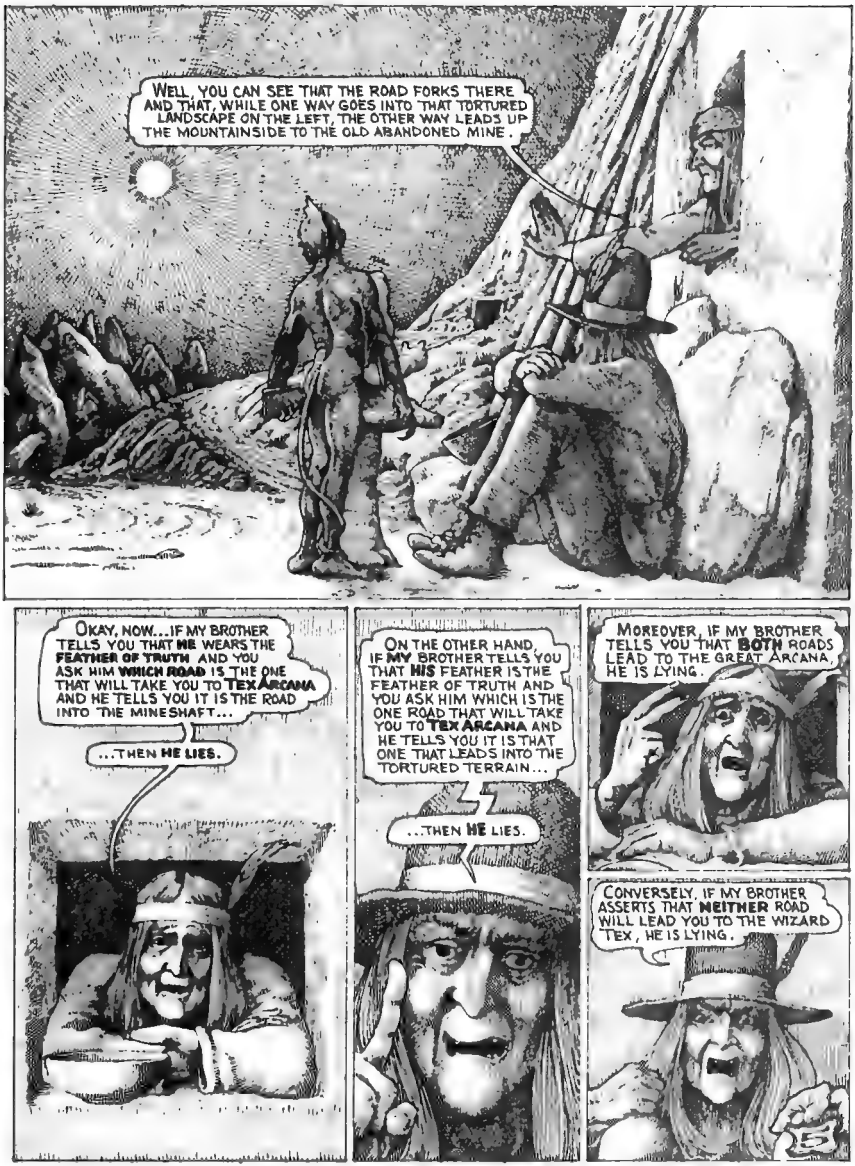
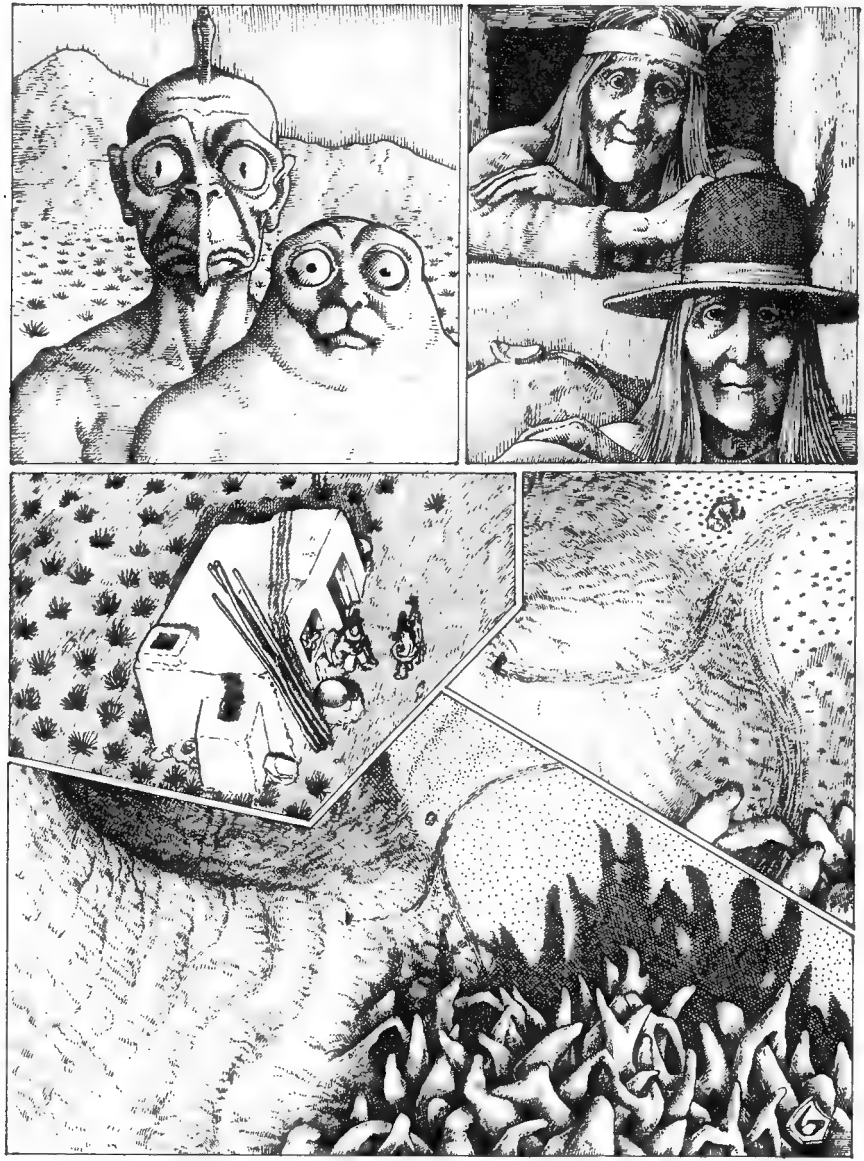
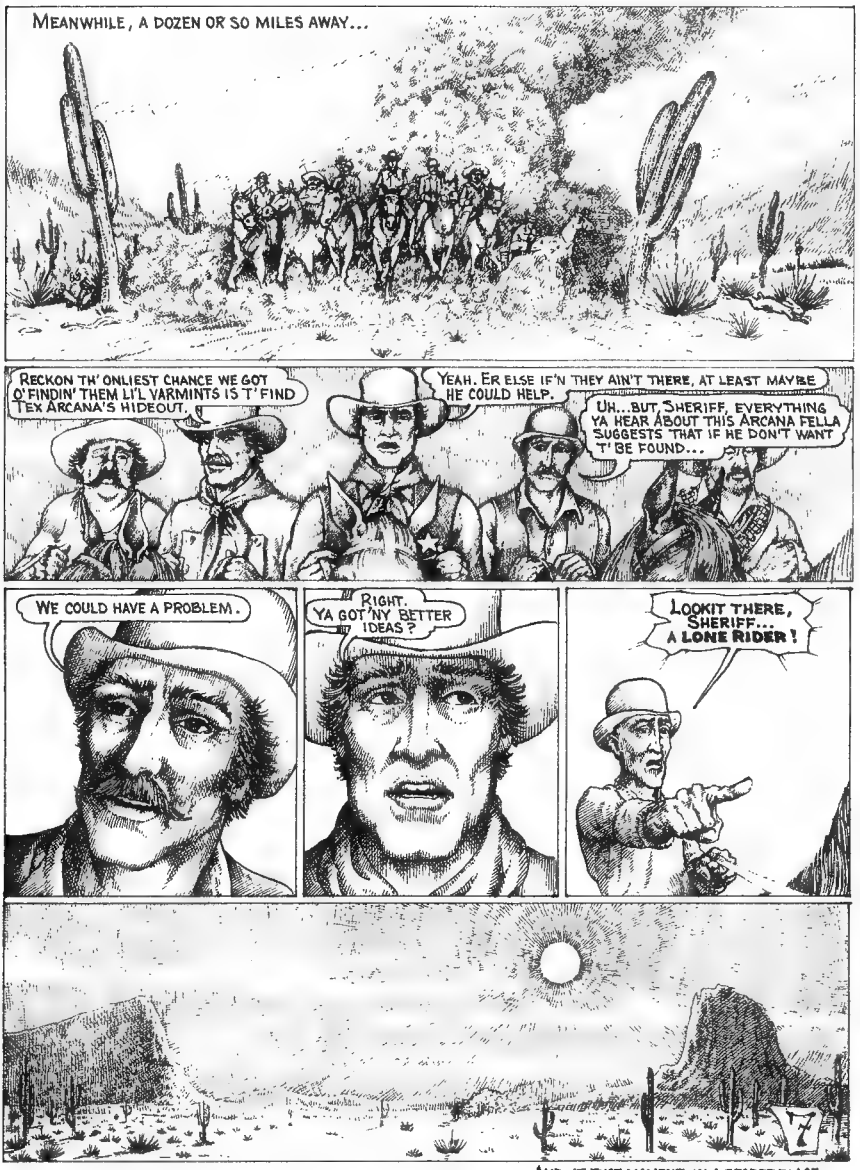
ZZZZZZZZZ
EXCUSE ME, UH... SIR!
ZZZZZZZZ
HUH?! WHITE MAN WANTEM REAL INJUN TRINKETS? RATTLESNAKE HATBAND? BEADED MOCCASINS? HOPE YOU BRINGEM HEAP PLENTY WAMPUM OR...?
HEY...
... I'M GUESSIN' YOU AIN'T JUST AVERAGE WHITE FOLKS.
AM I RIGHT?
HEY, DUKE! COME OUT AN' TAKE A GANDER AT THESE LI'L FOLKS!
2


WE GOTTEM HEAP MUCH AUTHENTIC INJUN POTTERY...TURQUOISE....
YOU KIN HOGTIE THAT INJUN SHIT. THESE AIN'T YER AVERAGE WHITE FOLKS.
WHY...YOU'RE RIGHT, LUKE. THAT THERE ONE'S SORTA GREENISH.
BEGGIN' YOUR PARDON, LITTLE BROTHERS, WE DIDN'T MEAN TO MAKE FUN OF YOU BY SPEAKING IN THAT CHILDISH WAY. WE THOUGHT YOU WERE TOURISTS FROM BACK EAST.
THEY COME... SOMETIMES....
TOURISTS? HM! MAYBE SO.
ACTUALLY, WE'RE LOOKIN' FOR THE MAN THEY CALL TEX ARCANA. THE MAILMAN SAID YOU KNEW HIS WHEREABOUTS.
AN' HE GAVE US THIS MAIL.
THE MAILMAN ALSO TOLD US THAT ONE OF YOU ALWAYS TELLS THE TRUTH.
AND THAT ONE OF YOU ALWAYS...LIES.
IS THAT RIGHT?
3

YES, PERHAPS.
IT DEPENDS.
NOT EXACTLY.
?
WE ARE COMPELLED BY AN...
AN INEXORABLE...
...INEXPLICABLE WHIM...
...FRENZY...
...TO DO SO.
WE THINK.
UH, YEAH.... BUT HOW DOES THAT, LIKE, HELP US TO FIND TEX ARCANA?
WHICH ONE O'YOU DO WE ASK?
WHO DO WE BELIEVE?
OUCH! DAMN!
4


WELL, YOU CAN SEE THAT THE ROAD FORKS THERE AND THAT, WHILE ONE WAY GOES INTO THAT TORTURED LANDSCAPE ON THE LEFT, THE OTHER WAY LEADS UP THE MOUNTAINSIDE TO THE OLD ABANDONED MINE.
OKAY, NOW...IF MY BROTHER TELLS YOU THAT **HE** WEARS THE **FEATHER OF TRUTH** AND YOU ASK HIM **WHICH ROAD** IS THE ONE THAT WILL TAKE YOU TO **TEX ARCANA** AND HE TELLS YOU IT IS THE ROAD INTO THE MINESHAFT...
...THEN **HE** LIES.
ON THE OTHER HAND, IF **MY** BROTHER TELLS YOU THAT **HIS** FEATHER IS THE FEATHER OF TRUTH AND YOU ASK HIM WHICH IS THE ONE ROAD THAT WILL TAKE YOU TO **TEX ARCANA** AND HE TELLS YOU IT IS THAT ONE THAT LEADS INTO THE TORTURED TERRAIN...
...THEN **HE** LIES.
MOREOVER, IF MY BROTHER TELLS YOU THAT **BOTH** ROADS LEAD TO THE GREAT ARCANA, HE IS LYING.
CONVERSELY, IF MY BROTHER ASSERTS THAT **NEITHER** ROAD WILL LEAD YOU TO THE WIZARD TEX, HE IS LYING.




MEANWHILE, A DOZEN OR SO MILES AWAY...
RECKON TH' ONLIEST CHANCE WE GOT O' FINDIN' THEM LI'L VARMINTS IS T' FIND TEX ARCANA'S HIDEOUT.
YEAH. ER ELSE IF'N THEY AIN'T THERE, AT LEAST MAYBE HE COULD HELP.
UH...BUT, SHERIFF, EVERYTHING YA HEAR ABOUT THIS ARCANA FELLA SUGGESTS THAT IF HE DON'T WANT T' BE FOUND...
WE COULD HAVE A PROBLEM.
RIGHT. YA GOT 'NY BETTER IDEAS?
LOOKIT THERE, SHERIFF... A LONE RIDER!
7
AND, AT THAT MOMENT, IN A SECRET PLACE...

HE'S GONNA BE PERFORMIN' AT 'TH' NOOSE AN' GIBBET SALOON.
HE CALLS HISSELF "THE TOAST O' EUROPE."
WULL, ONE THING'S FER SURE, YER GONNA BE A HEAP MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN HIS MUSIC...
...'R MY NAME AIN'T TEX ARCANA
WHATTAYA FIGGER HE MEANS BY THAT?

TO BE CONTINUED....

Petroglyphs

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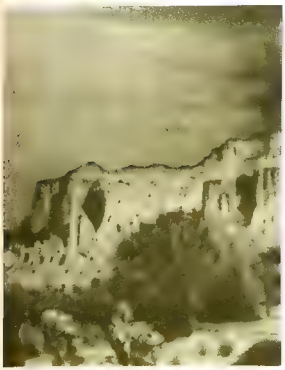

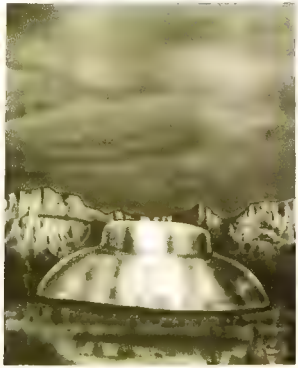

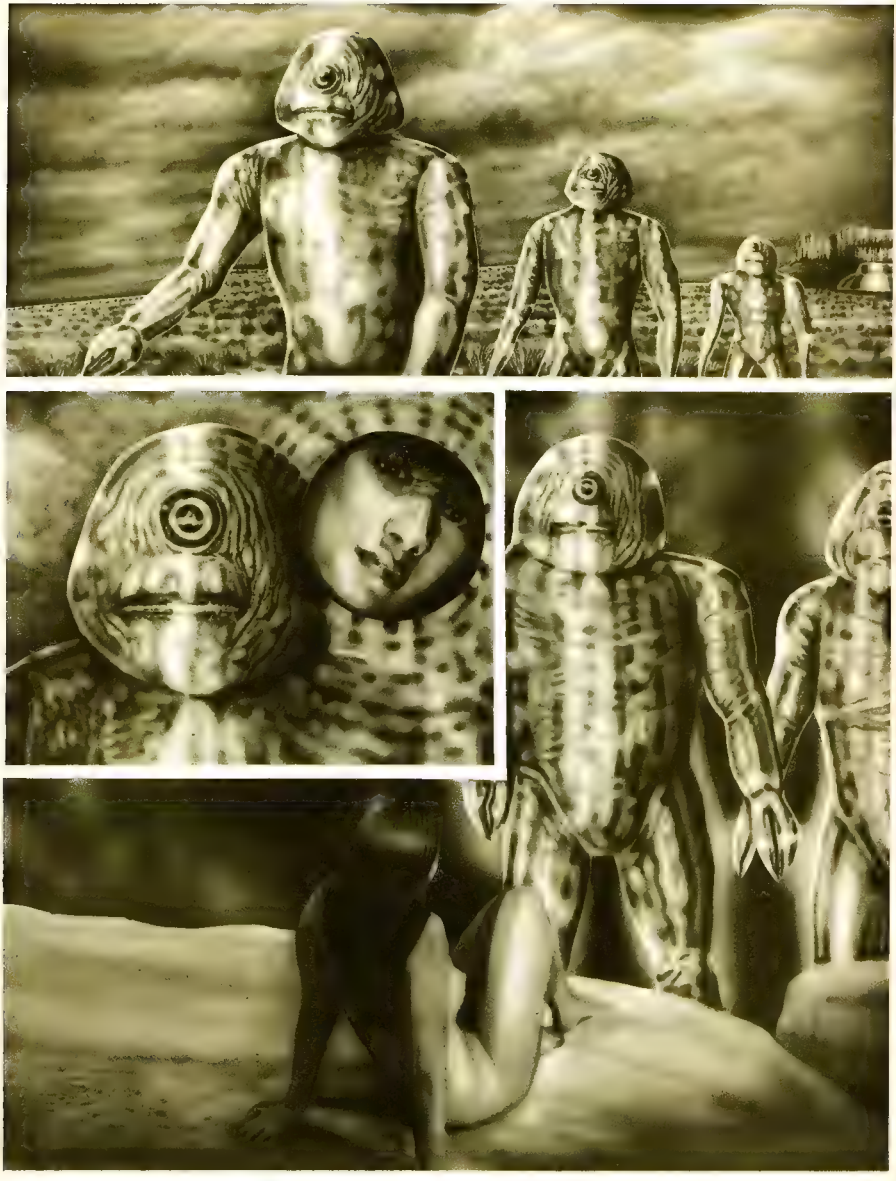

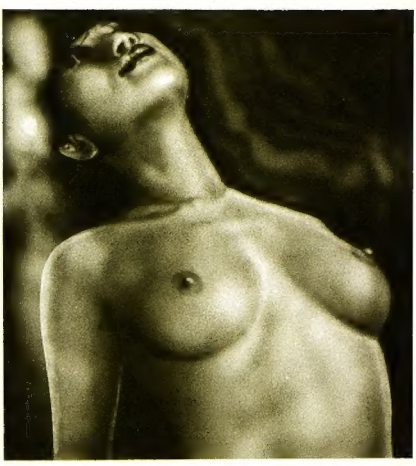

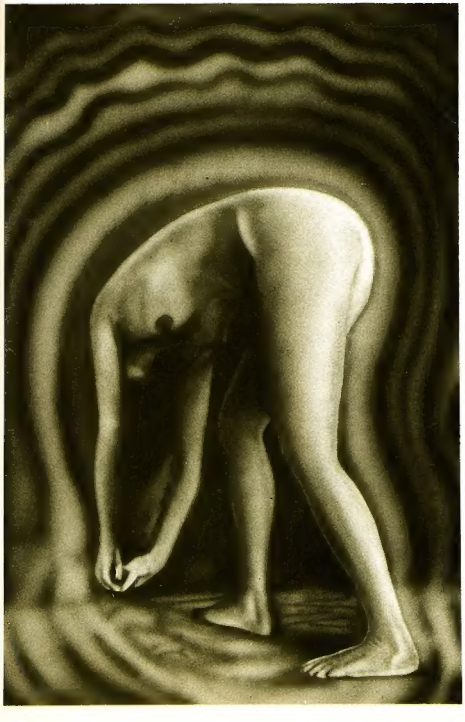

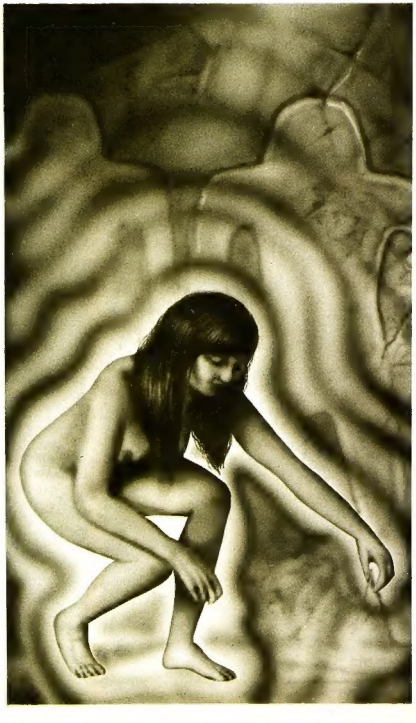

BRING HEAVY METAL HOME WITH YOU

Photo: John Duke Kisch

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